# Tales from the Pitch: An Ethnography of Male Collegiate Football Masculinities

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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# Abstract

This study is an ethnography of the life world of one group of male collegiate football players. Utilising traditional ethnographic methods of participant observation and semi-structured interviews the author explores the individual and collective experiences of university football of undergraduate male students.

Employing pro-feminist assumptions and Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony to underpin the overall analysis, the study describes the structures, practices and rituals that shape the men's identities in the collegiate football milieu, and locates this analysis within the broader context of structures of gendered power. In doing so, the author engages with the complexities and contradictions inherent to men's experiences of maleness, and the interplay of numerous, conflicted forms of masculinity are considered and depicted.

The findings from this study suggest that male collegiate football players construct broadly coherent footballing personalities and relationships that reflect the wider structure of gender relations in sport, but these identities are not always unproblematically assembled because of the interaction of the collegiate football milieu with other life contexts. Indeed, there are numerous tensions, competing discourses and contradictions at work within the socialisation processes.

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# Declaration

Some of the material contained within this thesis has appeared elsewhere in published form (Clayton and Harris, 2004; Harris and Clayton, 2002b).

# Statement of Ethical Practice

The following ethnography of male collegiate football masculinities strives to conform to the British Sociological Association's (BSA) codes of ethical practice throughout (socresonline.org.uk). The ethical considerations are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5, but some principal issues need to be outlined prior to commencement of reading this thesis. This research in its entirety is based on the freely given informed consent of the participants. While anonymity has been granted where at all possible, I do name the Higher Education institution, which was the setting for this research – Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College (BCUC). Primarily, this was necessary due to the descriptive and reflective nature of the ethnographic study, in which I necessarily disclose my role in the institution as both lecturer and Ph.D. candidate, thus making the anonymity of the organisation impractical. However, all necessary steps have been taken to protect the identity of those under study. Firstly, all named persons have been provided pseudonyms in order to protect their identity and, secondly, the team designation itself has not been disclosed (it is one of five male football teams at the institution).

This ethnography conforms to all codes of ethical practice as stated by Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College Ethics Policy (2005).

# List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| **BCUC** | Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College |
| **FIFA** | Federation Internationale de Football Association |
| **BUSA** | British Universities Sports Association |
| **SESSA** | Southern England Student Sport Association |
| **FA** | Football Association |
| **WFA** | Women's Football Association |
| **SU** | Student Union |
| **AU** | Athletics Union |
| **PE** | Physical Education |

# Chapter 1:

# Introduction

Preamble: Gender and the 'Beautiful Game'

One should never attempt a written account of football without acknowledging, at the earliest possible moment, the sport's phenomenal cultural significance and global appeal. The most fundamental intended outcome of this thesis is to dispense with the frequent parable that 'football is only a game'. It is, rather, a social institution of some persuasive magnitude. In England, in particular, football is a microcosm of wider society, and the values and practices it engenders may reveal a great deal about contemporary English culture.

The origins of football are somewhat contentious. Given what Giulianotti (1999: xii) refers to as 'football's innate simplicity', it would be difficult, or even impossible, to suggest just where and when the first ball was kicked. But it is this ease of participation, with the simple equipment and interchangeability of the rules, which is often accredited as the catalyst for the sport's phenomenal growth and appeal. Football today is a mass participation, passionate and commercialised institution. Its players at the top level have become icons of modernity, its clubs at all levels symbolise fierce territorial pride, and the inner workings of the game have provided the focus for much literary scrutiny. But these texts have tended to produce 'amiably anecdotal' descriptions of the football world (Williams, 1991: 4), and have ignored football's political centre.

Issues of class, race and gender, for example, were frequently taken for granted until very recently. Writings from the Leicester School loosely addressed these themes in the 1980s within their research on football hooliganism (see for example Dunning, Murphy and Williams, 1988; Murphy, Williams and Dunning, 1990; Williams, Dunning and Murphy, 1989). But, in following a figurational sociological approach, the crucial issue of masculinity, as a socially constructed intersection of social structures, was bypassed. Even more recent and

comprehensive texts, such as Giulianotti's (1999) excellent exploration of the sociology of football, have packaged the masculinity argument into just a few pages.

The prime issue here is that, while football has received some noteworthy academic attention (see for example, Armstrong and Giulianotti, 1999; Fishwick, 1989; Giulianotti, 1997, 1999; Mason, 1980; Tomlinson and Whannel, 1986), feminist and pro-feminist researchers have yet to make significant headway in the English national sport. Perhaps at the heart of this omission is the problem of access to men's football for women researchers, and while pro-feminist men are making important contributions to gender studies in sport, much of this research is carried out in North America where football (soccer) remains something of a marginal sport.

Football's stalwartly aggressive, competitive, chauvinistic and homophobic culture is too often taken for granted. It is universally recognised, often mentioned by football researchers, occasionally scrutinised and critiqued, but rarely actually researched. The construction of masculinities in football, I would posit, is far more complex and contradictory than commonsense notions foretell. Indeed, we can no longer consider football as a bastion of male domination because, while it may reflect wider society's gendered power structure, like wider society it is undergoing varying degrees of feminisation among players, spectators, commentators/pundits and officials (Giulianotti, 1999: xi). Significantly, then, the meaning of football to men and the male population is experiencing change. It would, however, be naïve to suggest that football has entered a post-feminist era. Indeed, as articulated earlier, it remains, to a large degree, in a pre-feminist era – away from the prying eye of the egalitarian project.

Moreover, analyses of football cultures have, in the past, tended to focus on the professional milieu. While I recognise the influence of the professional game, in terms of establishing points of design, ambition and discourse among the amateur ranks (see also Giulianotti, 1999), I contend that the two locales are likely to be very different, predominantly referring to issues of wealth and consumption, celebrityhood and the impact of non-football related contexts in the amateur

game. This latter point is of particular importance when considering English collegiate football. The male participants, here, are no longer (if they ever were) seeking professionalism in football and, thus, football is not necessarily their central life context.

Exploring Collegiate Football Masculinities

This case study of one male collegiate football team at Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College (BCUC) seeks to transcend recent sociological analyses of football, by presenting a rich and detailed description of the construction of masculinities and of male athletic identities in the football milieu. I utilise an ethnographic approach – field observations and life-history interviews – to convey an authentic and credible account of the life world of male collegiate football players. But I do not simply reproduce the data collected here. Rather, this ethnography is informed by an interpretive, hermeneutic approach, which seeks to explain the phenomena under study from the researcher/self standpoint (see especially Patton, 1990).

BCUC has five male football teams and, while this study examines just one, this team is referred to throughout the thesis as 'BCUC'. The team competes in the Southern England Student Sport Association (SESSA) university football league, and eventually finished the 2002/2003 season in second place in their division (see Appendix 1). In the concomitant SESSA cup competition, BCUC were eliminated in the quarterfinal. Matches are played on a Wednesday afternoon and training takes place on a Monday evening, both of which are primary contexts for my participant observation. Moreover, the third context of this case study is the sub-cultural practices at the Student Union bar on a Wednesday evening, where match results are celebrated or commiserated.

Aims of Research

The primary aim of this case study is not to answer any specific question or to attest or negate a pre-structured hypothesis. It is, rather, to uncover more of a world of which previous accounts have been inevitably limited. The aim, then, is to explore the life world of male collegiate football players from a pro-feminist

viewpoint – explicitly aligning the content with feminist agendas and seeking to connect the routines and practices of these men with a sociology of masculinity.

Within this, of course, there are questions to be addressed. How are masculine identities shaped within the collegiate football milieu? To what extent do men associate masculinity with their lives as football players? How do men negotiate conflicting masculine identities? What are the impacts of football related masculinities upon the men's lives? How may we locate collegiate football culture within the broader context of contemporary society and social trends? While these questions are not explicitly answered in the *Concluding Remarks* chapter (this is not my intention), they are the questions at the heart of the analysis and the findings of this study, and are indirectly addressed throughout. But, ultimately, this thesis is likely – and intended – to raise as many questions as it answers, in an attempt to develop feminist analysis of masculinity and sport, and expand upon the body of knowledge provided by existing pro-feminist research (the majority of which originates from North America, and excludes the study of soccer). The definitive intention of research of this kind is to propose a sophisticated theoretical conceptualisation of masculinity, an understanding of which may contribute to broad feminist goals of equality (see Whitehead, 2002).

In this sense, a general aim of this research is to assess existing theories of masculinity by way of their application to this particular context. Primarily, this thesis draws on Gramscian conceptualisations of structures of power (see Gramsci, 1971), which, in recent years, have been developed for critical feminist analysis of gender relations in sport (see for example Messner and Sabo, 1990), and of definitions of masculinity and, more specifically, of the interconnection of multiple forms of masculinity (see especially Connell, 1987a, 1995).

Thesis Structure

This conceptual frame is elucidated in *Chapter Two*. Here, I trace the history of the gender research, critically reflecting upon each non-distinct stage of the gradual process toward a credible sociology of masculinity. I analyse the simultaneous restructuring of Western society with the development of a recognition of gender, and the subsequent attempts to understand the processes

involved – from biological determinism, to role theory and patriarchy, to theories of hegemony. While I discount many of these perspectives as insufficient and limited, they are discussed at some length because of their contribution to a contemporary understanding of masculinities. Within this chapter, I also examine and explain the social constructionist perspective, which assumes masculinity to be historically constructed and a product of complex processes of socialisation.

*Chapter Three* moves this discussion about the social construction of masculine identities more specifically into the realm of sport. Here, I contend that sport is a primary site for the (re)production of dominant masculinities, and a comprehensive range of existing research is presented and critiqued to support my argument. Specifically, this chapter establishes that sport is a male preserve – largely free from the feminisation of wider society – and examines the influence of sports institutions (such as clubs and teams, the sports media) in the development of idealised masculine identities. I also analyse some of the emerging problems of sports related masculinity.

In *Chapter Four* the critique of existing research and literature continues, but now turns its focus to the football/masculinity relationship. It considers the history of the connection between football and masculinity, mapping the development of the sport in England from its brutal roots as a folk game in the Middle-Ages through to the present day. Here, I suggest, that the association between 'real' men and participation in football is founded partly on nostalgia and that there are, in fact, numerous contradictions within this interrelationship, which reflect wider contradictions of hegemonic masculinity as a whole. Nonetheless, football is considered here as a spawning ground for traditional masculine values and behaviours, and collegiate football is analysed and inferred to maintain some of the same masculinised parameters as the wider game.

*Chapter Five* temporarily moves away from conceptual issues and, instead, maps out the methodological frame within which this case study is conducted. Initially, this chapter provides a broad overview of my paradigmatic position, discussing and legitimating the interpretive approach to research and critiquing positivistic methodologies. I then go on to introduce the ethnographic methods used in this

research, and provide a discussion as to the credibility of ethnography in the social sciences as a way of both researching and writing about cultural phenomena. The remainder of the chapter is concerned with the actual research experience itself, demonstrating how the investigation emerged and developed, and the problems and issues encountered.

Having clearly outlined my conceptual and methodological frames, *Chapter Six* utilises empirical data from the eight life history interviews with the BCUC players. It takes an in-depth look at the individual men's heterogeneous experiences of football prior to coming to university, to the end of establishing the subjective components of their footballing identity. Specifically, this chapter examines the influence of family members, peers, schooling and the sports media in shaping the men's identities as football players. Concomitantly, it also explores football as a significant socialising agent in itself, and discusses the ways in which this has contributed to masculine identities.

*Chapter Seven* examines the ways in which the BCUC players constructed their masculine identities against the routines and practices of football play. It also provides insight into the particular brand of hegemonic masculinity favoured by the university college's football institution, and the interplay of this dominant, collective practice with subordinated and marginalised masculinities. This chapter highlights some of the conflicts and contradictions inherent to the blurring of the academic and football milieux, particularly with regard to the different class-related masculinities traditionally associated with each context.

The theme of blurred milieux continues in *Chapter Eight*, which considers the interplay between the collegiate football subculture and the men's construction of masculinities. Away from the training ground and match context, the non-footballing pursuits of the men as a collective are considered in some depth. Here, the conflict between footballing and other personal/social identities, and the team's unofficial hierarchical structure, are discussed in relation to issues of domination/subordination (issues of sexism and homophobia).

The concluding remarks in *Chapter Nine* summarise the key themes and issues of the case study and offer some thoughts about the way in which masculine identities are constructed in collegiate football at Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College. With these conclusions in mind, I provide some comments about existing theories of the social construction of male identities, and suggest ways forward for theoretical conceptualisations of masculinity.

The appendices at the end of this thesis are designed to provide further information for the reader. *Appendix 1* shows the 2002/2003 football league fixtures, results and final league table. *Appendix 2* and *Appendix 3* provide information about the eight life history interviews, showing the pre-interview agreement that was provided for each interviewee and also giving some basic background data on the men, as well as the date of the interview itself..

# Chapter 2:

# Toward a Sociology of Masculinity (and Sport)

Masculinity is not a rigid concept. To attempt to define it as such is to ignore the complexities and pluralities from which it is dictated. It is a vexed term: variously stretched and distorted, and open to multitudinous hierarchical descriptions of maleness and gender demarcations. It is, however, a concept that, partnered with its antagonistic principle of femininity, reflects (and reproduces) the partiality in culturally defined value systems. That is to say, the interplay of masculinities and femininities are at the heart of gender relations in Western culture, and dominant versions of masculinity express and sustain gender inequity.

Within this chapter, I aim to explore a credible 'sociology of masculinity': a framework within which men's identities, behaviours and interactions can be explored and interpreted in the contemporary gender-politicised context of sport. In so doing, I align myself with strands of feminist thought and seek to connect feminist theories with the sociology of masculinity – connecting the discussion of men in a critical or questioning sense with the greater desire for gender equality (see also Whitehead, 2002). The issue of gender relations as a social-scientific issue developed largely as a result of the changes in women's lives that occurred with industrial capitalism, but even seventy years later the focus of such inquiry remained partial in that feminist literature did not consider men in any other role than the cognisant perpetrators of oppression – absent or, at least, inanimate in gender rhetoric (see for example Figes, 1970; Maccoby, 1967; Myrda and Klein, 1968). Despite the limitations of these writings, the feminist mobilisation gained a great deal of momentum in the 1960s and 1970s. Even the realm of sport, which had largely managed to avoid feminist analysis and critical intrusion over the course of history, came under scrutiny as a 'fundamentally sexist institution' (Theberge, 1981: 342).

Feminist analysis of sport was pioneered, among others, by Hall (1972, 1978) and Greendorfer (1978), and paved the way for the first pro-feminist accounts of men, masculinity and sport (e.g. Sabo and Runfola, 1980). In the period since, conceptualisations of men and the 'male role' have developed into a 'realistic' sociology of masculinity, largely attributable to the fresh outlook on men provided by Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1987), which built on social practices rather than rudimentary discussion of rhetoric and attitudes and commonsensical versions of gendered characteristics. Sport has become a primary site for the maturation of this discussion; recognised as a microcosm of society and as one of the few remaining conduits of the expression of idealised 'macho' masculinities, against which, perhaps, all other masculinities and femininities are defined and shaped.

Despite the great advancements made in the past two decades in generating a credible theory of masculinity, it is important to begin this chapter with a brief overview of the origins of this particular field of the social sciences – an early sociology of gender. It is in these initial attempts at an understanding of sex differentiation and 'the problem of women' that current theory finds its roots and, as Connell (1987a: 25) tells us, the history of ideas about gender has shown that however radical a new development in thinking, earlier frameworks are carried forward with it. While the underlying configuration of this chapter is founded on chronology of theoretical advancements – or the ascent to a credible sociology of masculinity through which sport may be examined – I cannot offer a smooth chronological sequence of developments. Some of the concepts and theoretical frameworks discussed occurred simultaneously yet separately (in different sociological paradigms); others collectively forged exploratory frames but warrant separate discussion. Overall, however, I offer a systematic succession of research and literature, which has accumulated to a conceptual framework for the analysis of men in the phenomena of sport.

## The Genesis of Man: The Foundations of Masculinity Research

It has long been a characteristic of social captions that humanity is subsumed under the designation of man. The very nucleus of Western civilisation has been founded upon this linguistic flouting, referenced in the earliest expositions of

human existence, in the literary keystones of Christianity, and in the works of some of the most distinguished and popularised social commentators and scholars of our time. If man did not inherit the Earth, then he has surely claimed it for himself as a figurative people and the determined cornerstone of socio-cultural rhetoric. Today, in Western societies, such language may be branded as 'sexist' – disregarding, or at least inferiorising, women and homogenising men. However, in history, while social commentary and social theory have exposed and questioned many facets of disparity, inequity and intolerance, the subject of gender has regularly been of secondary importance.

Indeed, while research on men dates back many years, scholars recurrently discounted the importance of gender in men's lives. The work of Karl Marx reflected profoundly upon the significance of men's contributions to cultural history, but his assertions privileged social structure over individual choice (Marx, 1846/1978a, 1851/1978b). For Marx, men were the creators of and players within modern social history, but not as subjective beings. A focus on men as explicitly gendered individuals and even an apparition of a 'sociology of masculinity' was a long time coming, and was instituted largely as a 'point for comparison' in discourse on women. The study of women dominated early sociological analyses of gender and, relatively late on in its development, as feminism and the women's movement gained momentum in the 1970's, some men began writing in oratorical retaliation, confessing the 'troubles of being a man' (e.g. Goldberg, 1976; Nichols, 1975). Questions pertaining to the predicament of women were, at the outset of such scientific enquiry, a response to the changes that had overtaken women's lives with the growth of industrial capitalism (Carrigan *et al*, 1987; Connell, 1995). Much of this early analysis was supported by a predominantly biological exploratory frame, but was politically guided, coinciding with the emancipation of women and a basic restructuring of the field of argument in gender relations. That is to say, a doctrine of equal rights in the late nineteenth-century fuelled a feminist mobilisation in the West, which initiated the break-up of traditional structures (see Connell, 1987a) and consequently accentuated the political stakes. Moreover, given the almost simultaneous emergence of the social sciences and discourses on women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century, many commentators have suggested a correlation between the

emancipation of women and the birth of sociology (e.g. Carrigan *et al*, 1987; Klein, 1971).

Functionalist Sex-Role Theory

By the mid-nineteenth century, functionalism and its 'sex-role' framework almost exclusively steered discussions on gender. Parsons (1951, 1969), a notable precursor of functionalist thought, placed great emphasis on the processes of socialisation, particularly in respect of the family, in understanding how society maintained order and consensus despite ubiquitous potential for conflict. For Parsons, inequality of power was a natural phenomenon, which instinctively prescribed divisions of labour and resources, necessary for social stability. The relationship between men and women, and their respective 'roles', was key to this argument – the idea that women and men function as socialised beings at some subliminal but essentially biological level for the wider benefit of an ordered society (Whitehead, 2002). Of course, the origins of 'sex difference' research go back much further than this, to the late nineteenth-century when biological determinism began to be challenged by the first women to be allowed into mainstream academia (see Rosenberg, 1982). But it was not until sex difference research united with the concept of 'social role' (or 'role theory'), that the sex-role exploratory frame was established (Connell, 1995; Whitehead, 2002).

Here, guided by functionalist philosophies, masculinity and femininity came to be interpreted as the 'internalised' sex roles of men and women – the products of socialisation (Connell, 1995: 22). However, as Parsons and Bales (1953) made plain in *Family, Socialisation and Interaction Process*, the concept of sex roles was not to be used as a cultural elaboration of biological sex differences, but as a distinction between the roles of men and women ('instrumental' [masculine] and 'expressive' [feminine] roles) in the efficient functioning of social groups. Although Parsons referred predominantly to the male/female differentiation that operated within the conjugal family, his philosophy was not explicitly coupled with this context. He treated the conjugal family both as a distinctive social entity and as the express agency for society at large, entrusted with the function of socialising the youth. Thus he deduced the gender patterning of roles, and their

reproduction across generations, from the structural requirements of *any* social order (Carrigan *et al*, 1987).

Sex-role theory (or at least Parsons' version of it) transcended gender theory as simple biological sex differentiation and instead suggested that gender roles were socially, and partially psychosomatically, constructed and reconstructed within the family. However, at the heart of gendered socialisation, biological differences still determined a 'suitable' role. Masculinity and femininity became recognised as 'ways of being' for men and women as standardised groups, differentiated by 'natural' abilities and disabilities. More than this, though, sex-role theory assumed that men and women (or boys and girls) were passive recipients of cultural messages, devoid of free choice or individual interpretation and expression. Perhaps not surprisingly, as Connell (1995: 23) notes, sex-role research became a powerful tool for those with political agendas. After all, if young people were so apparently susceptible to social agencies, then new more 'constructive' or 'positive' behavioural models could be established in, for example, educational or familial processes. Role research – not just sex-role research – was overly complacent, at least in the political stakes: defining a socio-structural problem and suggesting strategies for restructuring. As such, perhaps inharmoniously given that much of the sex-role critique in more recent years is to be found in feminist writings, this unproblematic approach was adopted by and flourished with academic feminism, which quickly assumed that the female sex-role was one of fixed oppression and subordination (Connell, 1995). The limitations of this theoretical frame are particularly evident in early feminist work on sport, which had a tendency to scrupulously determine and compare male and female experiences, attitudes and athletic performances without emphasising any process, variability or power differentials (Messner and Sabo, 1990). What resulted was a base of empirical research that offered some contemplation of detrimental biological determinism, which, away from the field of sport, triggered the inclusion of discussions of men and the 'damaging male sex-role' for the first time in feminist literature. But this wealth of feminist and the New Men's Studies research was still largely ignorant of questions of freedom and constraint, structure and agency – in short, issues of power.

Sex-role theory was employed in these early works to gain greater understanding of the changing roles of men and women in the post-war period, and to make some sense of the way in which masculinity was expressed and 'forced on' men. What this did for gender research was to provide an opportunity for men to be included in discussions on gender, predominantly by laying the ground for questioning a unitary model of masculinity, which all men would 'naturally' aspire to achieve (see also Whitehead, 2002). The widespread adoption of sex-roles in feminist theorising, by the end of the 1970s, inevitably began to uncover the flaws in its unsophisticated theoretical underpinning. That is to say, there was increasing evidence that men and women were neither passive recipients of the socialisation process, nor unitary entities that could be unproblematically pigeonholed as masculine or feminine.

Sex-role theory was an important step towards a credible sociology of masculinity. Parsons' functionalist approach to gender studies provided the first explanations of difference that went beyond simple biology (although sex-role research held biological assumptions at its core). By the end of the 1970s, however, the notion of 'role' had been shown to be incoherent and the framework shown to mask questions of power, material inequality and historical mobility (Carrigan *et al*, 1987). Significantly, the breakdown of the traditional nuclear family paved the way for society's refutation of the 'separate spheres' model (Brod, 1994: 83) of separate gender domains, and for the subsequent adoption of conflict theory (particularly in its Marxist form). Cursorily defined, conflict theory emphasises the unequal distribution of power in society and the ensuing centrality of divergence and discord, founded, particularly, on social structures such as age, class, ethnicity and gender.

While Marx's outlook on gender inequalities is unclear, Marxist conflict theory has been profoundly influential in the development of a sociology of gender, and in the sociology of sport more generally. Marxism provided a narrative of social relations as grand as that of the functionalist perspective, but one that emphasised the struggle between the ruling-class and subordinated groups. In these terms, the institution of sport, as Rowe (2004: 100) observes, became viewed as 'the development of the commodification of everyday life by capitalism, appropriating

cultural pursuits, distracting the proletariat with sporting circuses, obstructing their revolutionary potential...'. In gender studies, the structural Marxist perspective also became pivotal, particularly as a basis for feminist conceptualisations of a patriarchal society.

Patriarchy

While much early feminist scholarship adopted mainstream sex-role theory to provide a social explanation for perceived differences in the personalities of men and women, it simultaneously, at a macro level, developed the concept of 'patriarchy' (see especially Millett, 1970) as a basic theoretical category to explain the seemingly universal domination of women by men (Messner and Sabo, 1990). Clearly, before there can be any critique of patriarchy, there must be a distinction made between the specific, historical use of the term, and contemporary, retrospective patriarchal discourse (Hearn, 1987). The origins of the concept of patriarchy are rooted in Marxist theory of the family, where the term implied the intimate power of men over women, which was exercised by way of the male being the breadwinner, property owner, and defender of women and children (Ehrenreich, 1995). In this sense, patriarchy is an inclusive term suggesting actual control, and the relationship between patriarchy and role theory becomes apparent. The mobility of roles within the family in recent history, however, led to the break-up of patriarchal control in traditional familial relations, fuelled, in part, by the growth of feminism. Retrospective patriarchal discourse may be seen as patriarchy's legacy, which remains vibrant in contemporary society, reproducing the misogyny and oppression that grew from the biological determinism in the 'age of patriarchy'. Here, patriarchy is an ideology of precedence, which is stimulated by an essentialist belief in men's biological and cultural supremacy. Although there are differences between these Marxist and feminist conceptualisations of patriarchy, they both allude to men's power as oppressive and ideologically validated.

Within feminism, the concept of patriarchy was introduced in the early 1970s (see especially Figes, 1970; Millett, 1970) as a discourse of men's control in all avenues of power within society. It became a useful tool for the analysis of sport, where sport, like many other social institutions such as the military, politics and

industry, was viewed as entirely 'in male hands'. This situation has changed very little in the last thirty years: men still dominate in every sphere of professional and amateur sport (such as administration, coaching, journalism and, indeed, participation). Despite this, the concept of patriarchy has been criticised in its application to contemporary society in that it implies a fixed state of male-domination, ignoring the mobility of gender relations and women's resistance to oppression by men (see Hargreaves, 1982; Kandiyoti, 1988). Moreover, the concept of patriarchy has been criticised as reductionist; erroneously universalising women's issues and interests as white and middle-class, excluding working-class women and Black and Asian women (Davis, 1981; hooks, 1981).

Despite plenteous feminist critiques of patriarchy it remains a stalwart of academic analyses of gender. This is, perhaps, because of the emotive power of the term and its usefulness in describing the strategic goal of hegemony. However, outside of the context of hegemony, as a 'stand alone' concept, the use of the term patriarchy comes with something of a 'health warning' (see Pollert, 1996; see also Whitehead, 2002). That is to say, it is limited and reductionist in that it fails to illumine points of resistance, change and difference among women and, moreover, is unable to accumulate men in its analysis.

The Modern Man: Including Men in Discussions of Gender

For a long period in the early-to-late twentieth-century, dialogue about the exclusion of women, paradoxically, tended to exclude men. Men, as a homogeneous faction, were present but inanimate – collectively symbolic of oppression, but individually unobserved. During the 1970s, feminist writers would often include lengthy and, more than occasionally, brusque chapters about society as 'a man's world' (see for example Figes, 1970), but would rarely see past naïve, unitary conceptualisations of men and women or disclose omissions to this patriarchal regime. In an apparently inadvertent attempt to compensate for this – but ultimately fashioning the same homogeneous illustration of men – social commentators such as Morris (1967, 1977) would consign society and social actions to an entirely male alias, in what were effectively sexist accounts of human behaviour. At this time, it seemed that men were the fabric from which society was constructed, but they were not gendered individuals and, thus, not

affected by gender. A later work by Morris explored human behaviour specifically in the context of football (Morris, 1981), analogising the ceremonies and rituals in the game with those of primeval tribes. While this was an interesting and – at a glance – a compelling text; even in this most 'macho' of environments Morris continues to disregard masculinity in men's behaviour patterns, assuming football is played out in a vacuum, free from gender power structures. Indeed, in the sociology of sport (and in sociology per se), few practitioners have been moved to utilise or even give attention to Morris's framework for human behaviour. A notable exception is Cashmore (2000) who includes the 'ethological' perspective as one of four grand theories of athleticism that may be used to make sense of sport. The strength of Morris's work, Cashmore suggests, lies only in its emphasis on the ways in which sport has embedded itself in modern culture and the modern psyche. Beyond this, Morris (1981) provides little more than a catalogue of functions of football, with no real attempt to link the functions together. While I utilise Morris's work throughout this study, I do not use it as some kind of formal theory of the social practice of sport, nor do I advocate its findings. Rather, I describe some of Morris's ethological observations purely for the purposes of pro-feminism's antithetical argument, in that Morris's line of reasoning is, at best, naïve and incomplete, and may even be considered sexist in its approach.

Of course, in the history of scholarship, direct attempts at an explanation of masculinity have been made – in biological, anthropological, psychological and sociological fields. Prior to the universal adoption of the sex-role paradigm, some scholars argued that the physiological organisation of males made inevitable the psychological temperament and social behaviours observed in men (see Kimmel and Messner, 1998). Elsewhere, the Chicago School employed anthropological/ethnographic techniques to examine groups of boys and men when their behaviour was perceived to be a 'social problem' (e.g. Thrasher, 1927; Whyte, 1943, both cited in Carrigan *et al*, 1987). Psychological theories have also made a contribution to the historical discussion of men and masculinity. The work of Freud (1900, 1905, 1918), in particular, articulated explicit developmental sequences for males, including the psychological distancing from the mother as a precondition for autonomy and the 'oedipal rivalry' with the

father, which stipulated 'male' characteristics such as independence, aggression and the capacity for abstract reasoning (see also Connell, 1994). The work of Connell is particularly Freudian at its roots, especially with regard to Freud's concerns with the presence of femininity in men and his subsequent questioning of the polarity of masculinity and femininity (Freud, 1905). As a result, Connell's (1987a, 1995) major works emphasise a mergence of psychoanalysis and (neo) Marxist social theory, of personality and the body and social structures and agents, providing a comprehensive framework for the analysis of gender relations.

It was ultimately the synthesis, by sociologists, of these biological, anthropological and psychological perspectives that developed into the sex-role paradigm (Kimmel and Messner, 1998), which came to dominate discussions of gender for the next two decades. Although the earlier masculinity frameworks were limited, it was within sex-roles (and specifically the adoption of sex-role theory by feminist scholars) that gender discourse lost sight of men and masculinity altogether. Here men were largely viewed simply and unproblematically as the 'oppressors', and women as the 'oppressed'. However, it was also the subsequent surge of feminist literature that began to challenge the sex-role paradigm and, particularly, preconceptions about men and women. By the mid-1970s, inspired by these pioneering efforts by feminist scholars, the first texts about men began to appear.

Some of the earliest of these texts (e.g. Farrell, 1975; Goldberg, 1976; Nichols, 1975) emphasised how the socialisation processes and male domination had harmful consequences for men as well as women, noting the confinement of the male stereotype. These were the first academic writings to consider men as gendered beings and, for that alone, they were a valuable contribution to gender studies. However, they were largely ignorant of the power dimension of gender relations, and adopted an exploratory frame not dissimilar to sex-role theory. That is to say, these theses still exploited the unexamined ideology that made masculinity the 'gender norm' against which both men and women are measured. Pleck was perhaps the first – and certainly one of the most influential – pro-feminist men to dispute this view and criticise the normative organisation of the male sex role (see Pleck, 1976, 1981a; Pleck and Pleck, 1980). Here it was

argued that men and the 'male role' could not be universally defined, as so many men's experiences, behaviours and attitudes did not support these normative features (see also Kimmel and Messner, 1998). For Pleck, change was a key theme in the discussion of masculinity; more men (and women) were being seen to 'go against the grain' and sex-role theory was unable to grasp this change as a dialectic arising within gender relations themselves (Pleck, 1976). Moreover, elsewhere in his writings, Pleck (1981b) paid a great deal of attention to men's power over women in his explorations of masculinity (see also Sattel, 1976). It was this first generation of research on men that set in motion an abiding critique of both the hegemonic form and definition of masculinity in the 1970s and 1980s. These writings, which many have since come to designate the New Men's Studies (see for example August, 1994; Brod, 1987), included studies on men in families (e.g. Lewis and Salt, 1986; Roman *et al*, 1978; Rossi, 1977), men in the work place (e.g. Korda, 1973) and, importantly, men as a non-homogeneous group through studies of Black men (e.g. Staples, 1982; Wallace, 1979) and gay men (e.g. Altman, 1979), all of which highlighted men's challenge to the, previously unexplored, traditional male role.

Hegemonic Masculinity, Hegemony and Antonio Gramsci

The notion of hegemonic masculinity was developed to a large degree by Connell (see especially Connell, 1987a) to highlight the multifaceted and socially constructed aspects of male dominance. Many of the determining features of the concept, however, are suggestive of the male sex role, which characterised *unexamined* conceptualisations of masculinity assumed in earlier studies – a unitary model of masculinity (white, middle-class and heterosexual) that all men struggled to achieve and reproduce. This idealised form of masculinity excluded certain male groups – working-class men, Black and Asian men, gay men and older men – and, thus, observed them as 'deviant' or problematic. Early writings by men on the subject of masculinity in the 1970s adopted this normative male sex role without question (Farrell, 1975; Goldberg, 1976; Nichols, 1975). These accounts failed to offer any substantive critique of male dominance as men's exercise of (gendered) power (Whitehead, 2002) and, thus, continued to subordinate those 'others' that did not fit into this standardised container. What

has been realised in more recent years is that no men fit comfortably with this normative definition of masculinity (Kimmel and Messner, 1998).

Indeed, men cannot be considered as a non-diverse group (Kimmel, 1994), nor can masculinity be viewed as being solely about men (Bhaba, 1995; Sedgwick, 1995). The concept of masculinity was born in the axiom of sexual difference, which has been abandoned as a reliable philosophy within sociology following numerous critiques of biological determinism. That is to say, the relatively inconsequential biological differences between men and women cannot explain why women may only be afforded a subordinate role in society. Connell (1987a) was among the first to examine the normative male sex-role that subordinated women and problematised certain male groups. He identified this as hegemonic masculinity, which, far from being the sole formulation of masculinity, is 'unsettled' by the representation of alternative masculinities such as those of gay men and men of colour (Gardiner, 2002: 13). There are a number of recent comprehensive texts on men and masculinity, which recognise and pursue male diversity (e.g. Adams and Savran, 2002; Berger *et al*, 1995; Brod and Kaufman, 1994; Kimmel and Messner, 1998). The variations in focuses of these texts avoids the classification of men as a unified collective – a faction opposing feminist movements and defending male identity – and instead discusses men as gendered individuals who can be affected and oppressed by hegemonic ideals.

Connell (1995: 77) defines hegemonic masculinity as 'the configuration of gender practice which embodies the *currently accepted* answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women' (my emphasis). Indeed, the constitution of hegemonic masculinity changes historically and contextually, represented by the most time-honoured embodiments and expressions of power in any given context. Therefore, sport may exhibit a 'brand' of hegemonic masculinity that differs from that of other social institutions, and football and individual football locales may also exhibit a diverse arrangement of particular contextual idiosyncrasies and nuances (see also Parker, 2001). Hegemonic masculinity, as Connell (1995: 76) defines it, and as I employ it throughout this thesis, is 'not a fixed character type, always and everywhere the same. It is,

rather, the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations, a position always contestable'. Contestation here largely comes from the interplay between gender, race, class and sexuality and the subsequent inevitability of the recognition of multiple masculinities, which are characterised as dynamic and relational to hegemonic masculinity.

(Pro)feminist scholars of sport began to recognise the importance of Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony in the examination of gender relations in the mid 1980s (see for example Bryson, 1987; Hall, 1987; Messner, 1988). This reflected a wider shift in the theoretical underpinnings of sociology of sport more generally, stemming from Gramsci's critique of Marx's philosophical standing, and particularly Marxist rejection of 'transcendentalism' in favour of 'materialism' (see Gramsci, 1971). That is to say, Marxism places a great deal of emphasis on the positivistic, calculable ruling, by the dominant group, of institutions, and the clinical imposing of ideology through these institutions. While Gramsci (1971) acknowledges, and discusses at some length, a need to distinguish between popular Marxism and Marx's actual thoughts on the 'concreteness' of social control (and stresses a need to utilise Marx's original texts, rather than later compilations of his works), Gramsci's own philosophy emphasised a more humanistic and commonsensical approach, paying greater attention to ideological superstructure (culture) than to state and economic structure. Indeed, Gramsci stresses the importance of social groups, within the world of economic production, 'creat[ing] together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give [the group] homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields' (1971: 5). The role of intellectuals, then, is to remain in contact with the masses (or the particular social grouping from which they arose), rather than separated from them, and to guide and inform the political movements of the people. Within this, as scholars of sport and cultural studies, and particularly gender studies, have continued to do, academics and other intellectuals are encouraged to utilise 'critical' common-sense and, especially, consider the cultural as well as the economic.

Gramsci's 'critical structuralism', like popular Marxism, fore fronted the conflict arising from class politics, but highlighted the non-inevitability of a concrete outcome. In its application to sport, as Rowe (2004: 102) articulates, 'the meaning and practice of sport are viewed as contested by social classes and other social groupings, and the outcome of that contestation is seen as less certainly resulting, as tends to be the case in classical Marxism, with the inevitable defeat of the proletariat and other subaltern groups'. Gramsci's concept of hegemony arose predominantly from his observations about the Italian 'subaltern' classes, and his proposed methodological criteria for studying and understanding their position in civil society. While it is not my intention to describe these criteria here (for such a description see Gramsci, 1971: pp52-5), the concept emphasises that power relations must be sustained by more than domination (economic, political and/or physical) alone. Rather, there must be some form of 'common consent' among the social groupings, which is in constant reform 'through a process of (admittedly uneven) negotiation that always holds out the possibility of limited but nonetheless significant tactical victories for subordinate and subaltern groups' (Rowe, 2004: 103). The study of the development, and subsequent defence, of dominant positions of social groups, as Gramsci (1971: 53) suggests, can only be undertaken as a study of hegemony, specifically the identification of 'the phases through which they acquired autonomy [...] and support from the groups which actively or passively assisted them'.

Gramsci's concept of class hegemony refers to the mobility of relations between the classes, within which one class procures and fights to sustain an advantageous position in society. Also centred around the thematic of power, gender relations may be seen to manoeuvre in a similar mode of contestation and, thus, are relentlessly shifting. In what have come to be known as 'critical feminist' writings, sport has been designated an institution created by and for men, which has served to reinforce a flagging ideology of male superiority by way of projecting hegemonic ideals. Sport has, therefore, helped to reconstitute male hegemony in the post-Enlightenment period. Rarely, however, do men faultlessly conform to the ideology of hegemonic masculinity, or women to exaggerated femininity. Rather, as Kaufman (1994) tells us, men (and women) develop harmonious and non-harmonious relationships with other masculinities,

fabricating hierarchies of power and identity not only between the two spheres of gender, but also within those spheres. Nonetheless, hegemonic masculinity remains the dynamic ideology around which patriarchal relations are constructed, legitimised and defended (see also Brown, 2002; Connell, 1987a, 1995; Kimmel and Messner, 1998; Brod and Kaufman, 1994).

Connell and the Gender Order

Hegemonic masculinity, then, is constructed in relation to various subordinated masculinities as well as in relation to femininities. As such, the gendered power thematic cannot simply be concerned with male domination of women as the reductionist concept of patriarchy has identified it in the past (see for example Figes, 1970; Millet, 1970). It is, rather, concerned with any number of dynamics of domination (e.g. gender, race, class, age, sexuality) – one of which may be more salient than others in a given historical context. That is to say, men do not share equally in the fruits of male domination and women are differentially oppressed, because other structural constraints are operational in the power equation.

The gender order is a useful framework with which to examine this arrangement of systems of domination and their interrelationship. Connell (1987a: 98-99) describes the gender order as 'a historically constructed pattern of power relations between men and women and definitions of femininity and masculinity', and uses the term for the 'structural inventory of an *entire society*' (my emphasis). Connell's notion of 'gender regimes' describes the structural inventory, or the state of play of sexual politics, within social institutions, such as the family, education, and 'the street'. The processes and procedures involved in each regime inform, and are informed by, the gender order of wider society. The major elements of any gender order or gender regime, according to Connell (1987a), are the division of labour, the structure of power, and the structure of 'cathexis' (emotional attachment).

To consider each of these elements in turn, the gendered division of labour is perhaps the most recognisable constituent of the gender order. It also remains the centre of most discussions of gender in anthropology and economics (Connell,

2002). At its simplest, it refers to the historically derived allocation of jobs as 'men's work' and 'women's work'. Such divisions of labour are common throughout history and across cultures, and are particularly familiar in the form of men's instrumentality (earning a wage) and women's domesticity (looking after the home). Though, as Connell (1995: 74) notes, the allocation of tasks sometimes reaches 'extraordinarily fine detail', as specific tasks both in and outside the home are constituted as men's or women's responsibility. One must also consider men's and women's unequal share in the dividends of capitalist societies, where men tend to control the means of production and amass great fortunes, while women still earn a lower wage than men in the same position of power.

The structure of power refers to the overall subordination of women and dominance of men (patriarchy) in contemporary Western societies. Explicitly connected to the division of labour – in that men's power stems from the historical construction of biologically determined social responsibilities, which have put all avenues of power and production firmly in male hands – power relations also recognise mobility through reversal and contestation. As Connell (1987a: 109) suggests, 'the authority of men is not spread in an even blanket across every department of social life'. Rather, the gender regimes of all institutions are very different, some of which may find women in positions of authority and men subordinated by way of political or even physical agents, and, in all cases, power can be diffused and contested. Indeed, local reversals of power, as a dimension of gender, are frequent, yet the general structure of power persists because the historically constructed connection of authority with masculinity legitimises a patriarchal structure of gender (see Connell, 1987a, 1995).

With reference to the structure of cathexis, Connell draws heavily on the work of Freud (1900). Freud's use of the term 'cathexis' referred to emotional energy – whether positive of negative – being attached to an object in the unconscious mind. Connell (1987a) utilised Freud's psychoanalytic work here, moving the discussion into the social arena to investigate sexual and emotional relations, attachments and commitments, which is an important dimension of gender, often interwoven with the division of labour and the structure of power (e.g. familial

relations), though also following its own logic. As Connell (1994) contends, long before social constructionism became influential in discussions of gender, Freudian psychoanalysis had offered a picture of adult character as constructed through a long, conflict-ridden process, within which the neurological (emotional attachment) could not be entirely separated from the social. This is particularly evident in discussions of sexuality, where sexual relations involve culturally formed bodily relationships, rather than simple impulse or reflex. Other emotional attachments also cross into the social arena, and may be affectionate or hostile. For instance, prejudices against women (misogyny) or against homosexuals (homophobia) are hostile emotional responses, which are also fuelled by social agencies (such as the legal system and the media), and are ultimately played out in the social arena. Cathexis is rarely this straightforward, however, because, as Connell (1987a) states, most close relationships are both hostile and affectionate at the same time. But these relationships are not only concerned with emotional attachment to other people. As Connell (1987a: 182) notes:

> Studs display their biceps and pectorals, suave charmers grow their pencil moustaches; girls emphasise their vulnerability in tight skirts and high-heeled shoes, sheer stockings and make-up that is constantly in need of repair.

Indeed, so much emotion is adrift in these marks of stereotyped sex difference that both men's and women's own bodies can become 'cathected' in their own right, as can other inanimate objects and possessions, such as clothing, make-up, sports cars and even technology.

Connell (1987a, 1995) contends that the gender order is a way of configuring social practice, initially by way of historical structures (labour, power and cathexis), and subsequently maintained by the organisation of social resources (particularly the law and the media, but also other institutions and agencies) and the 'naturalising' of gendered practice. The interpretation of gender relations as natural actualities of the social world is widespread, which is integral to male hegemony. The construction of sexual ideology by means of persuasion is evident through all the structural relationships that constitute the gender order.

Gendered divisions of labour are largely premised on a firm belief in natural capabilities of men and women (see for example Cavendish, 1982; Cockburn, 1986; Game and Pringle, 1983), and this theme is clearly visible in the sportsworld where men and women still have distinctive 'roles' and/or 'appropriate' sports in which to participate. The effect of ideological processes on structures of power is even more apparent, where the overall subordination of women and dominance of men persists despite the numerous local contradictions (Connell, 1995). It is, in effect, these encounters of ideology and opposition that define the problem of legitimacy in male hegemony. Of importance, here, is the recognition that dominant masculinities and femininities are not absolutely forced upon people. Rather, men and women – even those who are moved to challenge sexism and misogyny – willingly conduct themselves in ways that configures them as masculine or feminine, and many enjoy this polarity of gender (Connell, 2002). Here the power of ideology becomes clear, and it is equally powerful in the way that it operates on the structure of cathexis. For instance, as Connell (1987a) suggests, heterosexual attraction is consistantly interpreted as natural – the 'attraction of opposites' – and socially forbidden relationships, especially homosexual, are interpreted as unnatural. In sport, we may also suggest, ideologically speaking, that men have a natural desire for contest, for speed (in motor racing) and, for the sports spectator as well as the athlete, for a non-sexual emotional connection with other men (as sports teams, team-mates, professional athletes or fellow supporters). By the same argument, men that have no desire for sport, and women that do, are unnatural men and women (see for example Messner, 1992).

Connell (1987a) contends that, within the gender order, it is ideological practice that constantly overrides biological facts, and nature is appealed to for justification rather than explanation. But processes of naturalisation by way of mass persuasion, in themselves, imply a second element to the maintenance of the gender order: the cognitive purification of the world of gender (1987a: 246). That is to say, as I have suggested throughout this chapter, the reality of gender relations is not as clean and organized as ideological processes assert. Rather, there are ambiguities and outright contradictions, which, for the dominant structure of gender to be successful and maintained, need to be 'sanitised'. The

work of Connell (1987a, 1995, 2002) emphasises, in particular, two aspects of society in this purification process: the law and the media. While numerous social agents may communicate ideological messages (e.g. the family, education, peers), these two agents have the benefit of being more concrete and absolute in the structuring of gender. Anti-gay laws, still active across the world, are a case in point, not only asserting but also proscribing homosexuality as unnatural. The media, too, is active in the purification of the ideological world by excluding items that do not fit the naturalised model of relations. For example, in sport, as a traditionally male pursuit, the accumulation of academic literature over the last two decades stating the 'invisibility' of women athletes is considerable (see for example Billings, 2000; Harris and Clayton, 2002; Hilliard, 1984; Rinalta and Birrell, 1984; Sports Council, 1992), though it is yet to have any significant impact in terms of change.

Connell (1987a, 1995) is also moved to include in the gender order framework the interaction of social structures. That is to say, to consider sexual relations alone in the construction of masculinity (and femininity) is to grossly oversimplify the structure of gender in Western cultures. The way in which gender is played out is implicitly concerned with the relations among masculinities: relations that are internal to the gender order (hegemony, subordination, complicity) and external (marginalisation). Here, hegemonic masculinity is the benchmark – the currently accepted strategy for the legitimation of patriarchy, which is likely to change as new groups challenge old solutions and as women challenge any form of male domination (Connell, 1995). Whatever the presently recognised circle of legitimacy, however, certain groups of men are always likely to be expelled from it. That is, within the overall framework of hegemony there are specific gender relations of domination and subordination between groups of men. Gay masculinity is the most conspicuous of the subordinated masculinities, partially because it is so easily assimilated to femininity, and is subjected to an array of material subordinating practices (e.g. cultural and political exclusion, cultural abuse). However, in that any association with femininity is likely to establish separation from hegemony and evoke subordinating practices, gay men are not the only male group to be positioned outside of hegemonic masculinity. The process by which this oppression materialises is marked by an abounding vocabulary of

abuse: wimp, nerd, pussy, faggot, sissy, dweeb, geek, mummy's boy, and so on (ibid: 79), most of which implies effeminacy or homosexuality (even where heterosexuality is established).

As I have discussed previously, men rarely conform to the hegemonic ideal in its entirety. Yet many men do strive to attain hegemonic masculinity. This, as Kaufman (1994) sees it, is because manhood equates itself with having some sort of power, and the culturally contrived perceptions of the importance of this power leads men to suppress a range of emotions, needs and possibilities in their acquisition of hegemonic masculinity. Indeed, the majority of men gain from cultural dominance and, therefore, have some kind of connection with hegemony, but are unable to (or do not wish to) wholly embody hegemonic masculinity. That is to say, many men accept and even revel in the privilege of their gender and (hetero)sexuality but distance themselves from some of the expressions of this power. Connell (1995) utilises the concept of complicity (or complicit masculinities) to theorise this particular situation and determine the relationship of these men with the hegemonic strategy. Masculinities constructed in ways that realise the patriarchal dividend, without the tensions or risks of being the 'frontline troops' of patriarchy, are complicit in this sense (ibid: 79). It is by means of the display of complicit masculinities in Western cultures and sub-cultures that hegemony is realistically sustained, as this is where the masses are positioned.

The relationship between hegemony, subordination and complicity has been made clear, and is internal to social practice of gender. Further relationships between masculinities, however, are created by way of the interplay of gender with external structures such as race, class, age and so on. Race relations, class relations and gender relations cannot be realised in isolation but, rather, are simultaneously in play and, therefore, become an integral part of the gender order and, specifically, primary components of the dynamic between masculinities. Marginalised groups of men, such as Black or Asian, working-class, or older men bring another dynamic to the hegemonic pattern of masculinities and related masculinities. Black or working-class masculinities may not fit with the hegemonic strategy for gender relations and are, thus, marginalised.

Marginalisation, however, is always relative to the authorisation of the dominant group (ibid: 81). In a sporting context, for example, black athletes are often considered exemplars for hegemonic masculinity. But the fame, wealth and perceived muscular superiority of these individual stars does not yield social authority to black men in general (ibid: 81).

Connell's (1987a, 1995) concept of the gender order goes someway beyond the reductionist concept of patriarchy, recognising that gender relations are inevitably complex, fluid and dynamic. The relationships between hegemony, domination/subordination and complicity on the one hand, and between marginalisation on the other, provide a framework that allows for the analysis of specific types of masculinity (Connell, 1995). It must be made clear, however, that the definitions of these masculinities (such as hegemonic masculinity, marginalised masculinity) are in a constant state of change as historical and contextual configurations of practice.

A 'Crisis' of Masculinity?

> [Men have been] jolted by changes in the economic and social order which made them perceive that their superior position in the gender order and their supposedly "natural" male roles and prerogatives were not somehow rooted in the human condition, that they were instead the result of a complex set of relationships subject to change and decay.
>
> (Hartman, 1984: 12 quoted in Kimmel, 1990: 57)

Issues of sex, gender and power can be traced back to the dawn of civilisation, and the historical developments that have shaped contemporary theory are far from being distinct, successive steps towards equality. Masculinity theory has a context, which has been born from contemporary sociological thinking, but also from socio-historical myths, beliefs and values about what it is to be a man and what it is to be a woman. The laws that govern relations within and between the two spheres of gender are derived from the historically rooted concept of hegemonic masculinity, which remains an efficacious authority in shaping masculine structures. Other influences upon masculinity theory, however, have been acquired through cultural developments and modernity, such as feminism

and the New Men's Studies, and hegemonic masculinity remains only as an ideological measure of manhood.

The decline of the traditional patriarchy (gendered familial relations) may be labelled a 'crisis in the family', and the subsequent mobility in wider gender relations and power relations may be considered crisis tendencies toward a 'crisis in masculinity'. This, however, is a somewhat constricted line of reasoning in that it fails to sanction natural advances and conceptual innovations that stimulate and consequence from cultural progression. I am in agreement with Westwood (1996) in that all crises in sociology are born out of a crisis in modernity. With this in mind, it is better to view the forward mobility of sociological conceptualisations less as a crisis and more as a positive step in our cultural development. Indeed, it would be more apt to designate a 'crisis' were these social systems of beliefs to remain static.

Connell (1995: 84) argues that the purported 'crisis in masculinity' is erroneously termed:

> The concept of crisis tendencies needs to be distinguished from the colloquial sense in which people speak of a 'crisis in masculinity'. As a theoretical term 'crisis' presupposes a coherent system of some kind, which is destroyed or restored by the outcome of the crisis. Masculinity [...] is not a system in that sense. It is, rather, a configuration of practice within a system of gender relations. We cannot logically speak of the crisis of a configuration; rather we might speak of its disruption or transformation. We can, however, logically speak of the crisis of a gender order as a whole, and of its tendencies towards crisis.

Here it is implied that it is the interrelationship of men and women that is leaning towards crisis, due to the degeneration of the legitimacy of patriarchal power. Consequently, the signification of masculinity has become discredited in that it no longer reflects the gendered social structure of many parts of Europe and North America.

The problematisation of men and masculinity is a product of a complex social process rooted in Enlightenment, which really impacted in the post-war period.

Hearn (1987) gives an excellent overview of the principal economic, political and social changes – and changes in political and academic writing – which may be designated crisis tendencies of the gender order. As well as the collapse of traditional patriarchal power in the workplace and the family, these changes include the way in which men and women are written upon, and view their place within society with regard not just to gender, but also race, class and sexuality (see Harding, 1981; Kimmel, 1987; Segal, 1990). Masculinity and masculinity theory has been reconfigured to coincide with these changes and 'new' masculinities have been born. Employing this concept, we can see that the 'crisis of masculinity' is, in fact, a crisis of legitimation for hegemonic masculinity (Messner, 1992: 18).

Male identity has become beclouded and imperilled through changes in social organisation and intensifying diversity amongst men, as well as the emergence of feminism and the subsequent relative freedoms for women. At this time when traditional male roles are locked in ambiguity, sport has become a refuge for hegemonic (and complicit) masculinities. Messner (1987) argues that '...sport has become one of the 'last bastions' of male power and superiority over – and separation from – the feminization of society' (p.54) and '...is an important arena that serves partly to socialize boys and young men to hierarchical, competitive, and aggressive values...' (p.65). Sport is inherently male dominated, competitive and masculinised. It is clearly a powerful cultural arena for the reproduction of the ideology of male superiority and hegemonic masculinity. As Clarke and Clarke (1982: 63) point out, because sport 'appears to involve natural, physical skills and capacities, [it] presents these ideological images as if they were natural'.

Making Men: Social Constructionism and Body Reflexive Practices

A long-standing argument in the discussion of men and masculinity is derived from one fundamental question: are men born or are they made? In most accounts the latter explanation is adopted. Men are not born; they are made, and, more explicitly, as Kimmel and Messner (1998: xx) make plain in *Men's Lives*, 'men make themselves, actively constructing their masculinities within a social and historical context'. The *social constructionist* perspective has, as Connell (1995: 50) puts it, 'been wonderfully productive' in masculinity research in as much as it

has vanquished philosophies of biological determinism and of a static, unitary male role. This is not to say that social construction theory has stood alone in this fight, but it has provided an alternative to Freudian psychoanalytic paradigms (see Adams and Savran: 9-13 for elaboration), which may be less passable to sociologists.

The social constructionist perspective emphasises both cultural and historical variance in the social construction of gender. Being 'a man', therefore, is markedly relative, and predictably ordains some contradiction. Thus, the approach allows masculinity theorists to explore 'men's contradictory experiences of power' (Kaufman, 1994; see also Brod and Kaufman, 1994; Gardiner, 2002; Kimmel and Messner, 1998), by noting the way in which meanings of masculinity vary from culture to culture (and, indeed, sub-culture) and within one culture over a period of time. I use the term 'sub-culture' with some caution here, as it is a description that seems to have slipped into everyday rhetoric, unproblematically referring to a wide and diverse range of people, from a single sports team to an entire 'minority' population, such as black or gay (see also Donnelly, 1985). I do not intend to enter into a debate as to the correct use of term (for this debate, see Crosset and Beal, 1997; Donnelly, 1985; Gelder and Thornton, 1997; Harris, 1998), other than to explicate an understanding of sub-cultures in respect of the parameters of this thesis. Firstly, I take the prefix 'sub-' to suggest something less than or smaller than the dominant culture but, moreover, I assume the prefix to suggest something temporary or in relative transience (see also Gelder and Thornton, 1997: 2). The collegiate football team that is the focus of this study, for example, may value particular identity imperatives that may or may not be so valued in the more general context of sport or outside in familial or higher education contexts, in which the players perhaps find themselves for greater periods of time. Secondly, as indicated above, I do not assume sport to be a sub-culture in itself, but rather an institution that is comprised of many distinct sub-cultures, each possessing unique characteristics (Harris, 1998). It is here that I find social constructionism a useful theoretical perspective for the analysis of sport, as it recognises variations in masculinity within cultures, allowing for interchange between subcultures in the broader context of sport (for example, from men's amateur boxing, to men's professional rugby, to women's amateur

football), while still observing and accounting for the gender order at a macro level. Social construction theory has been employed in this way by sociologists of sport, particularly evident in the work of Messner and Sabo (see McKay, Messner and Sabo, 2000; Messner, 1992; Messner and Sabo, 1990; Sabo, 1998).

Social constructionism remains, however, an approach that is often accused of ignoring the socio-biological aspects of the male body and, particularly, disembodying sexuality (Connell, 1994, 1995; Vance, 1989). That is to say, it portrays the body as a 'field on which social determination runs riot' (Connell, 1995: 50), discounting the physical and biological, and therefore the psychological, aspects of male identity to the point that they are rendered invisible. For me, however, such a critique unfairly confines social construction theory to a 'limited exactness', defining and scrutinising the approach on its primary exploratory thread – that which takes the body to be a 'canvas to be painted' (ibid: 50). This is not necessarily so. To borrow Connell's artistic metaphor, a painter's blank canvas possesses certain physical attributes (such as height, width and textural quality); tangible parameters that enable or restrict what can be painted. So too with the male body.

In the sociology of masculinity the body is omnipresent, yet relatively invisible because studies of men's embodiedness (theoretical or empirical) are few. Thus, mainstream social science provides little help in exploring and understanding men's bodies in the social realm. A notable exception is the work of Connell (1987a, 1995), who highlights the relationship between gendered bodies and gendered power and, simultaneously, deconstructs any notion of givenness to the male body. The central theme of what Connell calls 'body reflexive practices' (Connell, 1995) is that bodies participate in gender regimes, not as docile vessels for masculinity and femininity, but as active components in the construction and announcement of gender. In this sense, the male body itself becomes a social agency in the construction of masculinity, informing, permitting and, in some cases, restricting gendered practice.

Bodies, Connell argues, participate in social process, through their capacities, development and needs, through the friction of their sedition, and through the

directions set by their pleasures and skills. And the case studies in Connell's (2000) *The Men and the Boys* demonstrate this point very well. One concerns a young man whose performance of masculinity was driven by pleasures of the body – drinking, recreational drug use, sexual promiscuity – and he was ultimately demasculinised and lost any sense of male identity when his body's resilience to these social practices gave out. Another concerns a man whose body he perceives to be non-athletic, which triggered a sense of difference that became sexual difference. Here, the bodily experience was one of inability or physical limitation, but this natural occurrence became of social significance as the body reflexive practice called into play social meanings and categories, which created a sense of inferiority, perhaps indignity, as a male heterosexual failure.

In adopting a social constructionist perspective in this thesis I fully acknowledge that the socio-biological (sexuality, sexual desire, and physicality) are symbiotically connected to masculinity. That is to say, I recognise and embrace the ways in which men's sense of themselves as embodied agents serves to inform their physical presence in the football milieu and their relationships with others (see also Whitehead, 2002). Connell's notion of body reflexive practices provides a useful framework within which to explore these situations when men's bodies desist remaining in the realm of the natural and enter the realm of the social. That is, as Connell (1995: 60) articulates, 'where bodies are seen as sharing in social agency, in generating and shaping courses of social conduct'.

Summary

Within this chapter I have provided a brief history of gender research culminating in an outline of a credible 'sociology of masculinity'. In this process I have discounted functionalist and 'first-wave' feminist analytic tools for the purpose of studying masculinity and highlighted them to be reductionist and void of conceptualisations of the power thematic in gender relations. I have instead argued for the use of a more convoluted approach, incorporating feminist and hegemony theories of gender (*critical feminism*) and utilising Connell's (1987a) concept of the *gender order*. The principles of this line of thought advocate a necessarily loose but 'hardworking' (Connell, 1995: 81) framework with which to analyse specific masculinities (hegemonic, subordinated, complicit and

marginalised) and their relationship with hegemony and each other. The approach also emphasises that terms such as 'hegemonic masculinity' are not fixed character types, but configurations of practice generated in particular situations in a changing structure of relationships (ibid: 81). Thus, sporting masculinities (and football masculinities in particular), within their own particular gender regime, may emphasise contextual idiosyncrasies and nuances that are complicit but not specific to the grand Western definition of hegemonic masculinity and the gender order (see also Parker, 2001). Likewise, terms such as 'marginalised masculinity' and 'subordinated masculinity' are not fixed in this sense, but may also be complicit in that they incorporate the general features dictated by Western hegemony. That is, definitions of varying forms of masculinity in sub-cultures – as I have previously defined them as 'other than' the dominant culture and, moreover, as transient and temporary – may differ from, but hold definite connections with, those of the wider gender order.

Extending this line of reasoning, as I will go on to elucidate in the next chapter, I contend that the institution of sport is one of the 'last bastions' for the construction of hegemonic masculinity (Messner, 1987) and a site where complicit masculinities are (pre)requisite, upholding the sport hegemony and (coincidentally) Western hegemony as a whole. To borrow Messner and Sabo's (1990) take on this exposition, both of whom are former athletes and, thus, speaking from experience as well from a theoretical standpoint, boys are 'initiated in to the world of sports by men and into the world of men through sports' (p.14). Sport, then, is a fundamentally, and almost exclusively, male preserve and, as feminist sociologists began to argue in the 1970s, 'the perception that sport is separate from the rest of society masks the fact that the values and structure of sport have always been closely intertwined with dominant social values, power relations, and conflict between groups and between nations' (Messner, 1992: 9-10). Sport is not some expression of a biological human need; it is a social institution, and like other social institutions (e.g. the economy, politics, the family) the structure and values of sport emerge and change historically, as a result of struggles for power between groups of people (ibid: 8). What is more, the foremost sociological player in this contention – masculinity – is not some 'biological essence of manhood' (ibid: 8), but is also socially constructed.

This is the underlying theoretical perspective I adopt throughout this thesis – a social constructionist perspective, my explanation of which is twofold. Firstly, I discount the notion that gender is biologically 'given'. Rather, I posit that men 'become' male by way of a complex set of cultural expositions and choices. That is to say, a process of interaction in which boys (and men) learn the gender scripts appropriate to their culture (one of which is a football script), but also attempt to modify and personalise those scripts (see also Kimmel and Messner, 1998). Within this argument, however, I do not lose sight of the body narrative altogether, maintaining that the socio-biological impacts upon the socio-cultural by way of physicality, sexuality and sexual desire (natural phenomenon that are then located and defined in society). Secondly, following on from this, I posit that masculinity is not universally generalisable to all men within any one society. It is, rather, susceptible to the various types of cultural groups that compose that society, all of which may be organised around other values. The challenge to the unitary, normative definition of masculinity is the second point around which this thesis is organised. As the introductory chapter of Kimmel and Messner's (1998) *Men's Lives* communicates, one's sex may be male or female, but one's gender is developed through a complex process of interaction with culture or sub-cultures (see also Messner, 1992). My aim here is to develop an understanding of the relationship between one's masculine identity and the structure of collegiate football as a social institution.

# Chapter 3:

# Sport, Men and the Gender Order

> Sport has become, it is fair to suggest, one of the central sites in the social production of masculinity. [...]. Indeed, demonstrating the physical and psychological attributes associated with success in athletic contests has now become an important requirement for status [...].
>
> (Whitson, 1990: 19)

Organised sport has become a social phenomenon of great magnitude and complexity (McPherson, Curtis and Loy, 1989). Although it has been around for many years, the continuing prosperity of many industrial societies, and the introduction of televised sports into our lives, has ushered sport into a new era and fashioned the spectacle we see today (Coakley, 1998). Sport is a social institution. It is a cultural product. Sports are part of our lives, and, thus, there are clear ties between sport and cultural ideology (Coakley, 1998; Horne, Tomlinson and Whannel, 1999; McPherson, Curtis and Loy, 1989).

The field of sport could be seen as an amplifier for a considerable range of contemporary cultural issues, but particularly perpetuated may be the distinction between the sexes and perhaps even the preservation of a highly traditional masculinity and femininity. Messner (1999) suggests that men who participate in sport are automatically granted heterosexual, masculine status, whereas women athletes raise questions about their femininity and sexuality. Developing this, Bryson (1990) and Humberstone (2002) suggest that cultural messages about sport are regularly two-pronged, celebrating the idealised form of masculinity (hegemonic masculinity) and simultaneously inferiorising femininity and non-hegemonic forms of masculinity; often labelled the 'other'.

It seems somewhat curious that feminist inspired literature on men and masculinity has ignored sport as a focus of inquiry for so long. As early as 1974, Cagnon noted that sport was one of very few remaining domains in which

physical expression of masculinity could still be acted out (Cagnon, 1974), and yet masculinity in sport continued to be taken for granted and, accordingly, overlooked. It was not until the early 1980s that the first significant attempts to focus on the sport/masculinity relationship were made (see especially Sabo and Runfola, 1980), but these early works have since been criticised for wanting a more convoluted conceptualisation of masculinity (see Bonde, 2000; Messner, 1992). Though their value as the precursors of sports/masculinity research is unquestionable. Some two decades later, there is now a wealth of feminist and pro-feminist literature concerning the role of sport as a spawning ground for hegemonic masculinity, and a preserver of masculine hegemony and the traditional gender order (see especially Birrell and Cole, 1994; Burstyn, 1999; Hargreaves, 1994; McKay, Messner and Sabo, 2000; Messner, 1992; Messner and Sabo, 1990; Messner and Sabo, 1994).

In this chapter I examine existing accounts of the male sporting experience and highlight the links between sport and gender. In so doing I explore the hegemonic patterns in sport, such as sexism, homophobia and aggressive competitiveness, to give an insight into how the male identity is shaped in sport contexts.

Sport as a Male Preserve

Dunning (1986) writes that the changing relations between the sexes are one of the most important social issues of our time. Men responded to the 'power shift' that occurred with the industrialisation of society by establishing sports clubs; male preserves where men could 'symbolically mock, objectify and vilify women who now, more than ever, represented a threat to their status and self-image' (Dunning, 1986: 176-7).

The changing relations of which Dunning speaks, however, have not eluded the field of sport altogether. Women's entry into sport has continued to increase, most significantly as participants in traditionally professed 'masculine' sports, and into other positions that have habitually been taken by men, such as coaching (see Birrell and Richter, 1987; Hargreaves, 1994; Hult, 1994; Lenskyj, 1986; Staurowsky, 1990; Thompson, 1988). It is in light of this that some feminist scholars have suggested that sport has the potential to transform gender relations

and go some way towards liberating women (e.g. Hall, 1990; Theberge, 1985). The decline of the practical relevance of physical strength in work and in warfare, however, fabricates the need for a surrogate space where men can continue to display strength, power and virility (Messner, 1992). Sport has become associated with the lost patriarchalism of wider society (Dunning, 1986), and serves as a 'microcosm' of this bygone social order where sporting success maintains some correlation with masculinity (Riordan, 1985).

Thus, men's and women's sports are routinely segregated and it is consistently the male game that takes precedence. Birrell and Theberge (1994) suggest that there remains an ideological control of women, clearly demarcating sport as 'male turf' and defending the fragile male ego. It is difficult to refute this, and Birrell and Theberge continue, 'preserving the sanctity of such spaces is particularly necessary when women are moving into traditional male worlds and privileges' (1994: 342).

Sport maintains a comprehensive ideological power structure in which the female athlete - or more accurately, her body – is intensely limited. Time-honoured images of femininity solidify male privilege by constructing and then naturalising the passivity, weakness, helplessness, and dependency of women (Messner, 1988). The physical capabilities of the female body are understood only in relation to those of the male, and sport celebrates and habitually overstates the differences between the two (Hargreaves, 1986). Yet concurrent with the increase in female participation in sport, there is also a new, counter-hegemonic, muscular image of women (Hargreaves, 1994; Messner, 1988), such as that embodied by Venus and Serena Williams in tennis, and Kelly Holmes in track athletics. Clearly such women pose a threat to the fragile ideology of male supremacy in sport in that they undermine traditional notions of biological differentiation.

This, however, has proven to be far from a triumphant step forward for the feminist struggle for equality. The modern female athlete finds herself caught on the contested ground between gender-related biology and the feminine ideal, which often results in the athlete becoming ambivalent about her own image (Messner, 1988). Indeed, some recent case studies have established that while

many women wish to participate in traditionally masculine sports, they are keen to maintain cultural expectations of femininity with regard to their appearance and (non-sporting) conduct (see Cox and Thompson, 2000; Halbert, 1997; Harris, 1998; Mennesson, 2000).

Cahn (1993) argues that women athletes procure labels of mannish, 'failed heterosexuals' and represent a thinly veiled reference to lesbianism (see also Boutilier and San Giovanni, 1983; Cahn, 1994; Hargreaves, 1994; Lenskyj, 1986, 1991). The figure of the 'mannish lesbian' athlete serves as a powerful impediment to female inclusion in sport. The frequent association between sport and lesbianism is deterrent enough for many women who evade the sporting arena.

The instinctive need for women athletes to disguise their so-called masculine characteristics and succumb to ideological reflections of the body reproduces male hegemony in sport, through essentialist principles of natural, physical difference. Additionally, as Bryson (1987) hypothesises, some social processes reproduce an ideology of male dominance based on representations of male traits as naturally superior to females'. Certain sports provide ritual support for male dominance by linking maleness with superior skills, which are more highly valued than those displayed in the 'inferiorised women's activities' (ibid).

While women's participation in traditionally male sports is steadily increasing (Hargreaves, 1994; Knight, 1999; Pirinen, 1997), the successful female athlete tends to be rendered 'invisible', or at least isolated from the 'real' sporting arena, which is the man's game. Even academics in the sociology of sport have given support to male dominance by excluding women from the forefront of discourse and producing essentially male orientated accounts of sport (Coakley, 1998; Elias and Dunning, 1986; Hargreaves, 1986). Further to this, discussions regarding female sports invariably necessitate the prefix 'women's' (e.g. women's football, women's hockey), distinguishing them from the male equivalent and perhaps giving a signification that they are not 'real' sports.

Resistance to the perceived feminisation of the male domain of sport has never been as blatant as in the cultural messages created by the sports media. Sport journalism, like sport itself, is predominantly a male controlled and male defined domain (Horne, Tomlinson and Whannel, 1999), and at a time when male dominance in sport is at last being questioned, the media is a powerful tool in upholding the traditional ideology.

The sports media continues to be a predominantly male space where women are afforded only marginal status (Clayton, 2001; Harris, 1999; Harris and Clayton, 2002b; Jones, Murrell and Jackson, 1999; Messner, Duncan and Jensen, 1993; Urquhart and Crossman, 1999). The UK Sports Council (1992) suggest that women gain somewhere in the region of 0.5-5% of total media coverage of sport. In light of these figures, it is unsurprising that sportswomen have been dubbed 'invisible' by some opponents of male hegemony in sport (e.g. Harris, 1997). Developing this, where women's sport does become 'visible' in the sports media, some authors have noted the trivialisation and marginalisation of the female athlete (e.g. Bryson, 1987; Daddario, 1994; Duncan and Hasbrook, 1988; Duncan *et al*, 1990; Jones, Murrell and Jackson, 1999). As Willis (1982: 121) notes:

> There is a very important thread in popular consciousness which sees the very presence of women in sport as bizarre. Frequently, reporting of women's sport takes its fundamental bearings, not on sport, but on humour, or the unusual. The tone is easy to recognise, it's a version of the irony, the humour, the superiority, of the sophisticated towards the cranks.

The trivialisation of women athletes is a major process through which masculine hegemony in sport is maintained. The sports media, in all its forms, reports upon women with patronising tones and repeatedly utilises sexual innuendo in an effort to create an atmosphere of dismissal of serious athletic efforts.

Additionally, Duncan (1990) recognises that women athletes who appear in the sports media are often sexualised, or more accurately heterosexualised, and commodified as objects of heterosexual desire (see also Mikosza and Phillips, 1999). This point is one highlighted as symbolic of ideological gender roles,

where attractiveness and eroticism correspond to traditional conceptualisations of femininity, and figuratively inferiorises women. To this end, women are afforded certain 'appropriate' roles in sport, which typically necessitate inactivity or serve a complementary, highly sexualised function (see especially Harris, 1999).

This point can be developed further in that idealised conceptualisations of femininity are prevalent within the imagery and dominant discourse of many publications. Certain athletes are represented as idiosyncratic sportswomen, hereby maintaining masculinity through ideological representations of femininity. These athletes tend to be ubiquitous in the sports media, thus suggesting that women's sport, in accord with the thesis of sport as a male (masculine) domain, is very much a case of 'survival of the prettiest' (see Harris and Clayton, 2002a).

The sports media plays a key part in reinforcing the sagging ideology of male supremacy in sport. Some of my own research has articulated the existence of a detailed formula within the print sports media, which works to emphasise masculine values whilst simultaneously inferiorising the 'other' (see Clayton, 2001; Harris and Clayton, 2002a, 2002b). Moreover, Messner, Dunbar and Hunt (2000) uncover a similar formula existent in American television's coverage of sport, identifying ten recurrent themes concerning gender, race, aggression, violence, militarism, and commercialism, which, they argue, 'consistently present[s] boys with a narrow portrait of masculinity' (p.380) and serves to strengthen notions of male dominance.

Sport and the Gender Order

Sport, then, can be viewed as a male preserve where not only do men outnumber women and patriarchal values reign supreme, but also there is an intricate network of mechanisms established to obstruct female entry. Further to this, by the nature of sport as a male preserve, a hierarchical structure is instituted, often referred to as the gender order. A momentary look at men's historical and contemporary experiences in sport highlights that it is a grand oversimplification to view sport simply as a patriarchal institution that reinforces men's power over women. Sport has, and continues to have, as much to do with men's relationships with other men as it does with men's relationships with women. Connell's (1987a) notion of the

gender order recognises that men are not a homogenous group, and taking into account structural constraints such as race, class and age, highlights that men share unequally in the fruits of male domination and women are differentially oppressed. Men's interest in patriarchy is condensed in hegemonic masculinity – the form of masculinity that is rigorously defended by sport – which is enforced by ridicule and even violence against women and gay men. Yet this interest is fissured by all the complexities in the social construction of masculinity. There are differences and tensions between hegemonic and complicit masculinities; oppositions between hegemonic masculinity and subordinated and marginalised masculinities (Connell, 1995). Thus, men's interest in patriarchy does not act as a unified force, even in the traditionally male sports, which protect and promote hegemonic masculinities.

In the twentieth-century, coinciding with the ascent of industrial capitalism, organised sport entered an era of reluctant inclusiveness as racial and ethnic minority and working-class men participated in sport in increasing numbers. Some time later the entry of subordinated groups of men, such as gay men and men of colour, further complicated the masculine ideology of sport. Subordinated and marginalised groups of men often used sport to resist domination of upper and middle-class white males, and their resistance most often took the form of a claim to 'manhood' (Messner, 1992). In many ways they were successful, as the sport hegemony authorised to some degree black and working-class men's embodiment of hegemonic masculinity. Thus, while sport is a domain of contested national, class, and racial relations, it is the hegemonic conception of masculinity in sport that bonds men, at least symbolically, as a separate and superior group to women (ibid: 19).

Sport is an arena of a diverse range of masculinities and, as Whitson (1990) demonstrates, it is an apparatus for the potential for men to develop these masculinities. But, for Connell (1987a, 1995), hegemonic masculinity is the yardstick by which all masculinities are measured. Within such a system, men are set apart not only from women but also from each other, determined by their 'manliness', which is established by the masculinities they display and the perceived value of those masculinities within a particular environment.

Manliness, and consequently the gender order, is generated through the numerous masculinising practices and opportunities presented within the domain of sport. In this sense, sport is more than simply a male preserve. It is an arena where men both compete against and find companionship with one another, providing an ideal ground for the construction of hegemonic or at least complicit masculine values.

Sport, Men and the Fraternal Bond

In a close contact male dominated setting such as sport, it is inevitable that men form certain relationships with one another. Benjamin (1988) argues that identity and individuality is accomplished, paradoxically, only through relationships with other people in the social world. Developing this, Messner (1989) suggests that the rule-bound structure of organised sports is a context in which men struggle to construct masculine positional identity. This is a well-founded observation, as the assembly of men in a highly masculinised setting, such as sport, inevitably constructs an innate inferiorisation of women, and also founds the need to establish an order of pre-eminence among the men themselves. These are the issues that this section of the chapter will concern itself with.

Whitehead (2002) suggests that, whether based around straight, gay, white or black identities, men's friendships with other men can be seen to be crucially important in sustaining masculine subjectivities. Taking this viewpoint, the congregation of men that occurs in the institution of sport can rarely provide the possibility for social transformations between men and women. Indeed, the sporting environment is frequently the backdrop of sexist and oppressive discourse (see especially Curry, 1991)

Sabo (1985) suggests that traditional athletic socialisation encourages males to think in hierarchical terms and accentuate differences, rather than similarities, between the sexes. Conversation among men about women, as Walker (1998) observes, often takes sexual interaction or traditional gender roles as a central theme, and is regularly associated with jocular expression of masculinity. The 'closeness' between males acquired through participation in organised sports may assert the need to openly declare ones heterosexuality. Indeed, according to Halle

(1984), sexist jokes affirm masculinity where social circumstances create a level of intimacy culturally regarded as unmasculine.

Developing this, Lyman (1987) suggests that male groups separate intimacy from sex, defining the male bond as intimate but not sexual (homosocial), and relationships with women as sexual but not intimate (heterosexual). This instinctive need to establish heterosexuality is fundamental in the acquisition of hegemonic masculinity. Particularly in the machismo fuelled field of sport, homophobia functions as a motivation or threat in defining and maintaining the male role, and the fear of being labelled homosexual can be used to ensure that males display, or suggest that they have displayed, 'appropriate' male behaviour (see also Lehne, 1998).

Curry (1991: 128) argues that male athletes' conversations about women fall into two categories:

> Women as real people, persons with whom the athletes have ongoing social relationships. This type of talk is seldom about sexual acquisition; most often it is about personal concerns [...] this type of talk usually occurs in hushed tones [...] Talk about women as objects, on the other hand, often refers to sexual conquests. This type of talk is not hushed.

Curry's observations certainly concur with Lyman's (1987) remarks about the locatedness of women in male group conversation. Of similar importance to the compulsory heterosexuality in women's sport (see Cahn, 1993; Wright and Clarke, 1999), it would seem, male athletes must also verify their heterosexuality by establishing their sexual aspirations and conquests. Curry (1991) cites several examples of this type of talk, which acts to elevate the masculine status of the man concerned and simultaneously inferiorises women:

> Athlete: "I was taking a shower with my girlfriend when her parents came home, I never got dressed so fast in my life."
>
> Athlete 1: "I just saw the biggest set of Ta-Tas [*breasts*] in the training room."
> Athlete 2: "How big were they?"
> Athlete 1: "Bigger than my mouth."

Curry's analysis of locker room conversations between male athletes has since been criticised for utilising and inadequate methodological framework (see Jimerson, 2001), but his deductions are nonetheless credible and clearly demonstrate how the fraternal bond extant in sport can aid the reproduction of traditionalised masculinity.

Gough and Edwards (1998) develop this analysis of 'laddish' talk and note that dominant masculinities are often bolstered with desultory reference to homosexuality and gay men. Gough and Edwards suggest that within a recreational, drinking environment, it is not uncommon to hear labels such as 'faggot', 'pillow biter' or 'arse bandit' applied to homosexual men. These references are most often used in hollow banter, rather than being aimed directly at gay men, and can also be applied to heterosexual members of the group in a jocular manner. Curry (1991) also notes the prevalence of homophobic talk in sporting contexts and considers this a defensive manoeuvre designed to create distance between heterosexual self and homosexual other.

Gough and Edwards (1998) are not the only authors to draw attention to the association of alcohol and 'manly' exhibition, nor to the position of alcohol in a sporting environment. Athletes have been identified, along with others affiliated with athletes or sport, as having higher rates of alcohol use and violent and sexual misconduct than non-affiliated men (Boswell and Spade, 1996; Crosset, Benedict and McDonald, 1995; Crosset *et al*, 1996; Curry, 1998). According to Curry (1998), men typically bond through activities rather than emotional disclosure. Drinking is a perfect mechanism for such bonding, as it is, in itself, a 'masculine' activity (Gough and Edwards, 1998; Hughson, 2000). Curry posits that the combination of athletes and alcohol regularly leads to two acts that might be considered masculine: fighting and 'screwing bimbos'. I can think of numerous cases of such behaviour involving elite British football players, including much publicised photographs of England centre-forward Teddy Sheringham 'living it up' with a bottle of vodka and an attractive woman in each arm, and the media attention when Chelsea player, John Terry, allegedly punched a nightclub

doorman in London. Behaviour of this kind is often associated with gaining status within the male group, where the ability to drink heavily, fight, and 'pull' women is affirmation of hegemonic masculinity (Curry, 1998; Hughson, 2000).

Referring again to the work of Sabo (1985), male athletes are socialised to positively value status difference and think in hierarchical terms, where masculinity is more highly valued than femininity (or perceived effeminate persona). Moreover, as Mangan and Hickey (2000) note, hierarchical relationships in sporting activities serve, directly or indirectly, to bind members together and to promote order and stability. According to Messner (1989) the position of any man within the hierarchical structure of sport is initially based upon his perceived social status, such as his class, education and his ethnicity. Further to this, however, men gain individual hierarchical identity within their sport and male group by way of competing against one another for 'manly' status, with hegemonic masculinity as the benchmark.

Sport, Ability and the Body

> If you have what it takes to make it in sport, then you also have the makings of a successful man.
>
> (Sabo, 1985: 5)

Sabo's comment seamlessly summarises the deep-seated raison d'être for sport. Connell (1983) makes an important argument that body sense and accomplishment are crucial in the development of male identity, and sport is empowering for young males precisely because it teaches them to use their own bodies to produce effects and because it teaches them to achieve power through practiced combinations of force and skill.

Competitiveness has long been considered a 'masculine' personality trait, and males quickly learn that culture judges them by what they do and achieve (Sabo, 1985). The melding of masculine self-esteem with expectations of successful competition is particularly evident in sport, and male athletes display a fervent resoluteness to competition and achievement. As Connell (1987b: 27) suggests, 'what it means to be masculine is, quite literally, to embody force, to embody competence'. Thus, as Whitson (1990) notes, the development of body

appearance and body language that are suggestive of force and skill is experienced, by adolescent males, as an urgent task.

Messner (1992) suggests that sport is an important arena in which men compete to establish an identity in the world, but, ultimately, (consistent) winning is all that counts. Only total success in sport invites considerations of hegemonic, macho-masculinity, yet, as Messner notes, 'the structure of the sportsworld means that the chances of getting anywhere near 'the top' are extremely small, and even if an athlete is talented and lucky enough to get there, his stay will be very brief' (ibid: 45). It is difficult to disagree with Messner on both counts, so social theorists might want to ask how sport can be so enthusiastically interrelated to notions of hegemonic masculinity when only total success is of importance and so few men actually achieve this.

The answer, as I see it, lies in the tenaciously specialised use of visual images and media discourse, where the successful male athlete is diligently visible, constructing an air of natural masculine proficiency in male sport. As has been argued elsewhere (Harris and Clayton, 2002b) traditional male traits are emphasised in the sports media, in an effort to establish an idealised masculinity in sport, yet, in actuality, the media utilises only a select few athletes or male sports teams to convey this message (see also Boyle and Haynes, 2000; Whannel, 2002). Moreover, Messner (1992) pronounces that stories of athletes like Joe Montana and Michael Jordan, who do come out 'on top', are highly publicised and thus serve to reinforce the dominant success ethic at all levels of sport. Authors such as Leonard (1980), Messner (1992) and Townsend (1980) have suggested that the disjuncture between this dominant ideology of success and the lamentable reality that most do not 'succeed' creates a sense of insecurity in men, leading to feelings of failure and problems with interpersonal relationships. Wearing (1998) extends this line of investigation to perceptions of the male body. Wearing suggests that the majority of men are disadvantaged in the social construction of male bodies, where men, particularly in the realm of sport, are expected to respond to the influential and pervasive forces of consumer culture, reflecting notions of muscularity, strength and power (see also Parker, 1996a).

Many authors (e.g. Hargreaves, 1994; Kimmel, 1996; Messner, 1992; Morgan, 1993) have demonstrated how men use sport as a means of proving muscular manhood, which dissociates women, and some men, from the centrality of the allegory of power. Davis (1990) notes that sport is a body practice that has often served as a male preserve, reinforcing notions of a natural superiority of males. A 'muscular' male athlete is a 'true' reflection of the ideology of hegemonic masculinity and sporting competence and symbolises success as both an athlete and a man. Female athletes, however, can only symbolise success as women, and gain acceptance as a successful athlete, if they conform to a traditional feminine archetype of the body (see Harris and Clayton, 2002a).

Aggression and Violence in Sport

The staging of, and resistance to, the gender order through ideologies or discourses (or both) is shrouded in uncertainty and debate, but what is clear is that there is a material actuality to hegemonic masculinities, habitually underpinned by violence or its threat (Archer, 1994; Hearn, 1998; Whitehead, 2002). Displays of aggression and violence are seemingly one of the few ways in which masculinities gain some tangibility (Anderson and Umberson, 2001; Kaufman, 1987a). Sport provides an ideal showground for such displays, as it remains an arena where aggression and a constrained measure of ferocity, vehemence and brute corporal contact are culturally accepted, and, in the case of many sports, even anticipated.

Cashmore (2000) talks of two types of violence in sport: that which occurs within the framework of the rules, and that which pushes the boundaries of this framework or even steps considerably over this boundary. Some sports are brutal by nature, and the rules of these sports permit a controlled amount of violence (e.g. American football, boxing, ice-hockey, martial arts, and rugby). These sports, and others besides, also tolerate a degree of violence beyond their framework of rules, usually resulting in penalisation of the individual or team (e.g. a yellow/red card in football, or a penalty and resultant power-play for the opposing team in ice-hockey). However, displays of violence through the vehicle of sport are, on occasion, far more barbaric. One of the most vilified sporting actions of our time is that of boxer Mike Tyson biting the ear of opponent Evander Holyfield in June 1997. As Cashmore (2000) pronounces, the universal

condemnation of this incident underlined how even the most aggressive of sports is sensitive to violence that occurs outside the framework of rules.

This, however, does not seem to thwart the common expectation and necessitation of macho demonstrations of aggression and violence in sport. As Australian journalist Atyeo (1979) expresses:

> The future of violent sports seems assured. Games will grow harder and bloodier to feed the rising appetite of an audience which will grow increasingly more jaded and satiated with violence, and increasingly more violent itself [...].
>
> (Atyeo, 1979: 377)

While Atyeo's view may be somewhat extreme, it does hold some merit in that sports related violence is increasing and is even accepted and encouraged to some degree. Attesting this, Whitson (1990) suggests that in contemporary Western culture, sport (and especially confrontational team games) ritualises aggression and allows it to be linked with competitive achievement and, in turn, with masculinity. Sport has become one of the most important sites of masculinising practices, such as aggression and violence, which are officially illegitimate in other cultural arenas (Dunning, 1986; Elias, 1971; Elias and Dunning, 1972, 1986; Whitson, 1990). Pringle (2001), in remembering his own experiences of rugby union as a young man, talks of the 'perverse pleasures in the tackle'. Pringle recollects that part of what constituted rugby as a 'man's game' was the view of specific acts of violence, such as the tackle, as legitimate and even honourable. The 'hard tackle' was encouraged and met with praise and admiration from the coach, male family members and team-mates, yet violence off the pitch continued to be discouraged. Pringle sums up his boyhood experiences of rugby thus:

> In essence, I was normalized to be respectful of others. However, in my first season of rugby, I was disciplined to inflict pain: 'hit the bugger low' and 'knock him to the ground'.
>
> (Pringle, 2001: 432)

The ritualisation of aggression and normalisation of violence in (some) sports is undeniable, as is the social appetite for aggressive and fervent conduct on the sports field. However, as Pringle connotes, there are competing discourses

surrounding aggression and violence, and these masculinising practices are not necessarily legitimate even on the sports field. This, I believe, is the issue to which Atyeo (1979) refers. Violence on the sports field often surpasses the boundaries of legitimacy, and conveys with it an erroneous and precarious message that may then be reflected off the field. Illegitimate violence in sport, or directly attributed to the disposition of sport (e.g. soccer hooliganism), is all too common, and while it may be actively discouraged and frowned upon, it is no less decisive in the reproduction of masculine attitudes.

Up to this point, I have predominantly focussed upon the inherently violent contact sports, but 'illegitimate' violence is equally as common in all competitive team sports, such as Association football (soccer). Dunning (1999) argues that the emotional ambience that competitive sport creates tends to reproduce aggressive tension, rather than provide an arena where people can vicariously discharge the frustration-engendered aggressiveness generated in their everyday lives. Seen like this, sports create an environment under which the possibility of violence is intensified. The case of Manchester United midfielder, Roy Keane, makes this point.

Roy Keane's recently published autobiography (Keane, 2002) revealed that his potentially career-threatening challenge on Manchester City's Alf-Inge Haaland in April 2001 was intentional. For this Keane faces disciplinary action from the Football Association (FA), but this did not deter him from elbowing Sunderland midfielder, Jason McAteer, in the face in September 2002. This latter incident, coupled with the revelations in his book, led to much media scrutiny, including *The Sun* headline 'Keane out of control' (Custis, 2002).

However, Keane is not the only perpetrator of violence in professional soccer. Players such as former Chelsea and England midfielder, Dennis Wise, and former Manchester United and France star, Eric Cantona, to name but two, have found themselves in trouble for violent conduct on and off the pitch. But, as Cashmore (2000) suggests, while violent conduct is not condoned on the playing area, it's likely that long suspensions and heavy fines would be the limit of the penalties.

Further to this, the 'bad boy' image of the professional soccer player has become somewhat accepted, even fashionable, with the publication of numerous autobiographies of current and former players who made a name for themselves through controversy and aggressive persona (e.g. Jones, 1998; Pearce, 2000; see also Whannel, 2002). Vinnie Jones' new career as an actor, playing 'hard-man' roles, is directly attributable to his aggressive style of play as a footballer and member of Wimbledon's notorious 'Crazy Gang'. A quote from his book, *Vinnie*: the *Autobiography*, epitomises the kind of player he was:

> ...my first move, my first challenge, produced a yellow card from referee Keith Burge's pocket. I was straight in on Dane Whitehouse. I must have been too high, too wild, too strong or too early, because after three seconds [*of play*], I could hardly have been too bloody late!
>
> (Jones, 1998: 253)

In the case of Vinnie Jones, and also players such as Stuart Pearce, David Batty, John Fashanu, and Dennis Wise, reputation as a soccer player has been built upon an aggressive style of play and an air of violent unpredictability, rather than their competence in the legitimate side of the sport.

Pain, Injury and Sacrifice

Aggressive and violent sports, and particularly the infliction of pain upon an opponent, may be seen as 'manly' activities, affirming an air of traditional masculinity with the participant(s). However, the use of the body as a weapon in competitive sport, and the ensuing acquisition of hegemonic masculinity, comes at a price to the perpetrator, as well as the recipient, of violent acts. Pain and injury are common in all competitive sports, especially the more brutal, contact sports, but the reception of injury may be as fundamental in the construction of traditional masculinities as the hostile fervour that was at its cause.

Atyeo (1979) points out that each year, in U.S. sports, there are roughly twenty million injuries serious enough to need treatment by a doctor, and (American) football, in particular, reduces a professional player's life expectancy by as much as twenty years. The importance of the body and the masculinised 'tough' image of professional sportsmen, in the construction of sport as a macho domain, have

already been discussed. But Messner (1992: 71) contests that this is one of the ultimate paradoxes of organised combat sports:

> Top athletes [...] are often portrayed as the epitome of good physical conditioning and health, but they suffer a very high incidence of permanent injuries, disabilities, alcoholism, drug abuse, obesity, and heart problems. The instrumental rationality that teaches athletes to view their bodies as machines or weapons with which to annihilate an objectified opponent comes back upon the athlete. The body-as-weapon ultimately results in violence against one's own body.

Messner articulates the ambiguity evident in the use of physical violence in sport with respect to the social construction of idealistic male identities, which may be the raison d'être for the wealth of research upon sporting injuries, violence and pain (e.g. Messner, 1990, 1992; Messner and Sabo, 1994; Nixon, 1996; Young, White and McTeer, 1994), particular in the 'combat' sports such as wrestling (e.g. Curry, 1993), American football (e.g. Roderick *et al*, 2000; Sabo and Panepinto, 1990), and rugby union (e.g. Howe, 2001; Sparkes, 1996). The conclusions of some of these studies suggest that sportsmen tend to discount previous injury and are uncritical of the organisation of contact sports, and accept the notion that 'real men' endure pain and injury in stoical fashion (Curry, 1993; Messner, 1992; Nixon, 1996; Roderick *et al*, 2000; Young, White and McTeer, 1994).

Sabo and Panepinto (1990), in their study of the relationship between (American) football coach and his players and football as a male initiation rite, suggest, 'courage and ability to endure pain [...] set initiates apart from uninitiated boys and from women' (p.117). Moreover, coaches orchestrated and rationalised many 'pain-inducing' experiences to 'sort out who was meanest' and 'prepare boys to play the game' (ibid: 122-3). The importance of enduring pain and injury in a manner befitting the idiosyncratic male should not be overlooked in the acquisition of hegemonic masculinity (Sabo, 1998). However, 'manly' status may only be obtained if those around the athlete are fully aware of the distress being felt, and conquered. Howe (2001: 292), in an ethnographical investigation into pain and injury in rugby union at Pontypridd RFC, notes how the disclosure of pain displayed an unusual pattern:

> Players tended to be most vociferous about minor pains and injuries and the loudest complaints were made about injuries that were played on. If a player broke his forearm the pain was obvious but then 'disappeared' as players no longer made reference to it, whereas if the injury were 'playable' then the player concerned would let it be known that he was not pain-free.

Referring again to the work of Messner (1992: 72), many athletes 'give up their bodies' by playing while injured, knowing that it may cause them permanent damage. The reasons for this, according to Messner, lie in the external pressures (from coaches, team-mates, fans and the media) to play while hurt, and the internal structure of masculine identity that results in men becoming alienated from their feelings.

This blatant disregard for injury by some male athletes is well demonstrated in an extract from soccer player, Stuart Pearce's, autobiography, *Psycho* (Pearce, 2000: 257-8):

> One of my pet hates is to suffer an injury and be substituted and then five minutes later discover the pain has worn off [...] Once I damaged my knee ligaments and cartilage after 20 minutes and played on until half-time; I did the same in a Mercantile final at Wembley and played on for another ten minutes. But one of the worst was when I was caught by David Campbell (*an opposition player*) [...] His studs went right through my little shin-pads and split the muscle sheath. There was a distinct hole and then a little egg-shaped protrusion appeared. [The physiotherapist], who had run on, was nearly ill when he saw it. 'What the fuck is that?' he said. I didn't know so I just told him to spray some painkiller on it to get me through the last 15 minutes.

On this particular occasion, Pearce had broken his tibia, yet managed to play on until half-time. Even then, he states, 'personal pride dictated that I wouldn't go off on a stretcher, so I lifted myself to my feet and the physio helped me off into the dressing room...' (Pearce, 2000: 258).

An incident, such as this, of a high profile sportsman enduring physical pain, and sacrificing his personal well being for his team and his sport, is likely to secure some media attention. Sabo and Jansen (1998) suggest that the media's

fascination with pain and sacrifice in male sport is connected to the masculine status, which comes from an athlete's ability to accept suffering as an integral component of sport. In actuality, as I have suggested elsewhere (Clayton, 2001), the 'pain principle' is utilised by the sports media to communicate a dual message about the gender order in sport. A male athlete who suffers physical pain from injury, or indeed psychological anguish from defeat, is frequently commentated upon with words such as 'brave', 'determined', and 'tough'.

Sustaining more serious injuries, however, can lead to great despair and feelings of dejection for male athletes due to the affect upon the perceived physical competence of the man (Green and Weinberg, 2001). As Messner (1992) notes, being out of sport for any amount of time can bring about feelings of insecurity and worthlessness as a man. Men have a socially defined need to establish themselves as 'somebody' in the public world and when they are forced out of sport, temporarily or permanently, through injury, they lose this identity, and the 'non-athlete' becomes a 'non-man' (Messner, 1992). There is a fine line between gaining and losing masculine identity through injury in sport. While the ability to endure the initial pain from injury encompasses some sort of machismo, as Howe (2001) connotes, the injury is soon forgotten about by team-mates and spectators, leaving the injured athlete to suffer the longer-term consequences.

Summary

This chapter has illustrated the potency of hegemonic masculinity and suggested the conspicuousness of a vigorous gender order at work in the sports arena. The existing sociological literature emphasises the cultural locatedness of sport as a mainstay – the last bastion – for the production and reproduction of traditional gender roles. The growth of feminism has clearly problematised hegemonic processes within gender relations and endangered the patriarchal regime by contesting ideological messages about what it is to be man and what it is to be a woman.

In this era of change, a paradox has developed. Masculinity and male rule has been resisted, challenged and, consequently, has become fragile. But this fragility fuels its potency, forced into the athletic corner of Western culture, hegemonic

patterns have developed and masculine identity has become more important then ever in sport. As recent research has identified, this redoubtable presence of hegemonic masculinity in sport raises numerous issues and problems for both women and men. At a macro level, sport is a predominantly male sphere, affording men far more opportunity, support and, not unconnected, greater cultural presence in terms of media visibility and patriotic association. At a micro level, men's sport is organised as aggressively competitive, and protects a uniformly sexist, homophobic and often racist sub-culture.

As a primarily ritualistic arena, then, sport, in general, endorses men's commitment to patriarchy and a traditional gender order, and realises the components of male hegemony more so than any other facet of society. As this chapter has shown, a wealth of existing research connotes that sport celebrates heterosexual men and simultaneously inferiorises the 'other'. The organisational features and aesthetics of many male sports (particularly team sports) advocate behaviours and styles that accord closely to an ideological manliness, including aggression, competitiveness, discipline, and the infliction of and tolerance to pain. Moreover, the athletic fraternal bond provides an all-male setting where men's rhetoric and actions are often masculinised, aggressive/violent, (hetero)sexist and/or homophobic, in a sub-culture that is dominated by the pursuit of alcohol and sexual conquests.

As well as being a social sphere for the subordination and exclusion of women, then, sport provides a setting for the negotiation of masculine positional identity among men, where hegemonic and complicit patterns are valued. In this sense, it is clear that it is not only women who suffer at the hands of masculine hegemony, as men are often inflicted with a sense of insecurity and compelled to give up other feelings and values in their attempts to acquire a hegemonic masculine identity. At the very least this serves to legitimate patriarchy and, as such, inhibits the development of an equal society. But, moreover, it can cause men to develop dangerous masculinities, which can be detrimental to the health of self and others (e.g. drug use, injury).

The large proportion of sociological research on hegemonic masculinity and sport utilises male team sports as its focus. In Britain, association football is the national sport and, despite the rapid and continuing growth and visibility of women's football, it remains a stringently male affair. The next chapter will bring the discussion on sport masculinity, and its problems, more explicitly into the British football context.

# Chapter 4:

# More Than Just a Game: Football Masculinities

Following on from chapter 3's review of the existing literature regarding sport, masculinity and the gender order, this chapter examines existing accounts of the football/masculinity relationship. Specifically, it considers the roots of football masculinities in the brutal English folk games and endurance of these values and aesthetics, which are still visible in the modern game – particularly those of regional and national identity, aggressive competitiveness and stringently male subcultures.

The chapter highlights the problem of masculinity in football, utilising literature from a range of perspectives. Some contradictions to British football and hegemonic masculinity are reflected on, considering changes in styles of play – largely influenced by the influx of foreign players and coaches – and refereeing attitudes, which are often perceived to have 'softened' the game. Finally, this chapter draws the discussion of masculinities into the realm of university football, which may evidence both parallels and differences in terms of playing style and sub-cultural pursuits to the professional game.

## The Football Context

> The point about football in Britain is that it is not just a sport people take to, like cricket or tennis or running long distances. It is inherent in the people. It is built into the urban psyche, as much a common experience to our children as our uncles and school. It is not a phenomenon; it is an everyday matter.
>
> (Hopcraft, 1988: 9)

> To understand the enormous worldwide interest in this rather simple ball-kicking activity, it is important to reject at the outset the naïve idea that it is 'only a game'. This phrase is often heard, uttered in exasperated tones by angry anti-sportsmen [...]

> failing to appreciate that it is much more than that. If they examined it more carefully they would soon realise that each soccer match is a symbolic event of some complexity.
>
> (Morris, 1981: 15)

The cultural significance of football, at regional, national and global level, cannot be overestimated. It is undoubtedly Britain's biggest sporting export, and is now a symbol of popular nationalism for many countries. Mason (1989) notes that while the rapid spread of the game was undoubtedly associated in part with its basic simplicities and with the intrinsic satisfactions of the game itself, it was also associated with Britain's world power status and her worldwide trading connections.

Armstrong and Giulianotti (1999) acknowledge that as football continues to thrive as the world's most popular sport, there has been heightened public and academic interest in the game's global dimensions, in addition to the already considerable host of publications about the sport's national status. It is somewhat surprising, then, that the national sport failed to gain any academic attention for many years. Fishwick (1989: ix) suggests that this is due to the fact that 'players and officials did not generally belong to the same tradition as politicians or writers whose private papers can keep scholars busy for decades'.

The modern phenomenon of football is underpinned by complex social and cultural identities. Russell (1999) remarks that, from the earliest moments, football has proved a potent vehicle for the generation of territorial loyalties, and support for a particular team may provide some sort of 'symbolic citizenship'. Moreover, much research has suggested that football bolsters geographical identities at a local (Holt, 1989; Mason, 1980), regional (Phelps, 2001) and national (Armstrong and Giulianotti, 1999) level, each adopting football in appreciation of their own distinctive socio-geographical ideals and using it as a 'vehicle for identity'.

Yet football, across the globe, maintains its own unique language, which, some have suggested, may transcend barriers of culture, class and race (Butler, 1997; Harris, 1998). Indeed, Giulianotti (1999) states that football is increasingly

peculiar in a sporting sense, in that it encourages heterogeneity, and may be played by any person, of any means, as it requires no specialist attire or sophisticated technology. The number of different ways that football increasingly penetrates the boundaries of popular culture is nothing short of phenomenal (Harris, 1998).

In order to fully understand the prominent position of football in contemporary society, we need to recognise that the football match is a symbolic event of some complexity. Morris (1981) conveys that football has many faces; some of which are obvious, some are masked, and others are false. Morris articulates seven 'faces' of the football match: a ritual hunt, a stylised battle, a status display, a religious ceremony, a social drug, big business, and a theatrical performance (for a full descriptor of each of these, see Morris, 1981: 15-30). What seems clear is that football has become considerably more than just a game.

Giulianotti (1999) suggests that we are now in a post-modern era of football culture, characterised in part by the globalisation of the game and the subsequent exploitation of football's financial procuribility, which, as Harris (1998: 33) notes, is in complete contrast to the late 1980's when 'football' was perceived as a swear word due to problems of hooliganism and racism. Morris (1981: 27) pronounces that 'each soccer match is a 'hard sell', with massive advertising and television sales, high-profit catering and expensive seat tickets'. However, Morris's work of some two decades ago cannot do justice to the extent of the commodification and commercialisation of the game in recent years.

Real (1998) notes that no force has played a more central role in the commodification of sport than commercial television and its institutionalised value system – profit seeking, sponsorship, expanded markets and competition. Indeed, Rupert Murdoch's *Sky* television's multi-million pound contract with the Premier League has irrevocably transformed English football, which now succumbs to the whims of the television company, as matches are now played at times to the suit sponsors and the television schedule (Kew, 1997). Football has almost certainly become 'Murdochised' (Cashmore, 2000: 313).

Many players too have become commodities in all manner of business markets. David Beckham, for example, has numerous 'big money' contracts with, among others, *Adidas* sportswear, *Police* sunglasses and *Pepsi*. It is undoubtedly true that, in the post-modern era of sport, 'football sells', and what were once referred to as spectators, fans or audiences are now called 'markets' (Cashmore, 2000: 321). What cannot be denied is that the relationship between football, television and the business world is a two-way process, augmenting football spectatorship as well as product sales. Indeed, it is the inception of television that has really shaped sport into what we know it as today (Coakley, 1998), and the globalisation of football and the staggering popularity of the game owe much to the introduction of televised matches.

In England, and indeed most of the British Isles, football is undoubtedly the national sport, transcending all social classes and ethnic groups. It still does not, however, transcend the boundaries of gender. Indeed, football is a primary site for the promotion and development of masculinity, exemplified by the almost exclusive maleness of the football arena (Dunning, 1999; Holt, 1989; Mason, 1980; Tomlinson, 1995).

Football and the Nostalgia of Masculinity

In order to fully appreciate the 'maleness of the football arena', arguably it is necessary to briefly consider the historical roots of the game. The origins of football can only be speculated upon, given that kicking a ball is such a simple activity. Exactly where the first ball was kicked it is impossible to say, and no single society can be said to have 'invented' football (Soar and Tyler, 1983).

Football as we know it today is widely considered to have developed in the British public schools, but reliable evidence for the existence of a game called 'football' in Britain begins to accumulate as early as the fourteenth century (Dunning, 1999). For much of the ensuing period – 1314 to 1660 – the game was prohibited as it was considered too 'wild' and distracted men from other, more 'useful', activities such as archery (Dunning, 1999; Mason, 1980).

Dunning (1999: 51) quotes sixteenth century humanist, Thomas Elyot's, condemnation of 'foot balle', describing it as a game in which there is 'nothynge but beastely furie, and exstreme violence; whereof proceedeth hurte, and consequently rancour and malice do remayne with them that be wounded'. It was, however, the brutality of these early games that made them so popular with the British people.

As such, the opposition to and attempts to ban 'football' were futile and by the end of the eighteenth century, 'football' was central to British society as a kind of subtle and ubiquitous male language. Early forms of football were populist in character, but they were also keenly and regularly played among the elite, particularly Oxbridge undergraduates (Walvin, 1994). Holt (1989: 173) articulates that the working class imbued early modern football with a masculine value system all of their own, which differed markedly from the accustomed Christian ideal:

> Football enshrined older forms of toughness and rudeness, which stoutly resisted the 'civilising process' of fair play and sportsmanship [...]. [The working-class] happily transgressed the 'limits of decent partisanship' in terms of middle-class standards of language, gesture, and style.

While debates over football and social class will keep academics busy for years to come, there can be no argument that 'the game has always been a decidedly male preserve and a location for the expression of, and experimentation with, a variety of masculine identities' (Russell, 1999: 17). Indeed, the 'football' that became popular in most parts of Britain was 'a very wild game indeed' (Elias and Dunning, 1986: 197).

Giulianotti (1999: 2-3) states that 'folk football' was notably violent and 'uncivilised' compared to the modern game. Hacking, punching and general fighting were commonplace as rival players settled old scores; broken bones, serious injuries and deaths were not unexpected outcomes (Elias and Dunning, 1972). Despite these palpable negative outcomes of the game, 'football' fostered a strong sense of social belonging and had the capacity to nurture a certain social

order. Giulianotti (1999) embraces this as the motive for the transition of folk football to modern association football, in that the games more 'noble' characteristics were promoted by Britain's elite.

As noted by Dunning and Sheard (1979) and Mason (1980), by the early nineteenth century England's Public Schools had deteriorated into breeding grounds for rebellion and chaos, with regular outbreaks of rioting. Sport became central to the '(re)moralisation' of the nation's privileged youth, and games such as 'football' were utilised to instil character, loyalty and discipline and build a 'muscular Christianity' (see Mangan and McKenzie, 2000; Mason, 1980; Wigglesworth, 1996).

It was here in the public schools that the brutal sport of 'folk football' developed into something like the football of present (see for example Dunning and Sheard, 1979; Giulianotti, 1999; Mason, 1980; Russell, 1999). Football rules were codified and matches overseen by school housemasters (the first referees). However, the rules varied between institutions. Birley (1993: 257) reports that football 'was not so much a single game as an array of roughly similar tribal codes preferred by different public schools'. In the second half of the nineteenth century 'football' had been divided into two broad codes. Old Rugbeians and Etonians favoured a hacking and handling game, whereas Harrovians prohibited these actions and adopted a 'dribbling game' (Giulianotti, 1999).

These two variations of the game took very different paths in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and went on to become rugby and association football respectively. The rules of association football were formally codified by the then recently formed Football Association (FA) in 1877, ironing out any remaining inconsistencies (Mason, 1980).

Football has undergone numerous changes over the past few centuries; from its (acknowledged) beginnings as an unruly, violent and irrational activity to its codified, organised and rationalised present state. Throughout this period, however, it has maintained an intensely masculinised cultural status through its association with identity, aggression, brutality, 'muscular Christianity', and a

wide-ranging 'maleness'. While some of these characteristics may have been lost along the way as football became more 'civilised' and separated from forms of rugby, the nostalgia of a traditional model of masculinity remains.

Modern Football and Hegemonic Masculinity

In the term 'modern football', I refer to the game of today. This is the game that emerged from the English public schools and subsequently became universally regulated as the national sport of most of Britain and disseminated across the world. I refer to the 'peoples' game (Walvin, 1975), the 'global' game (Giulianotti, 1999), the 'mediated' game, the game that recognises multi-million dollar teams and millionaire players as well as amateur school, college, pub and Sunday league teams and players. I refer to the game that boasts a worldwide following, and that abides by the rules and regulations as laid down by the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA).

Holt (1989: 8) conveys that many of the emotions and attitudes expressed within football accord closely to a cluster of characteristics often considered to represent 'true masculinity'. There is no denying that football culture celebrates physical strength, loyalty to other men and to a specific territory, as well as more aggressive and often violent actions on the terraces and among hooligan groups (Russell, 1999).

Football epitomises the notion of sport as a male preserve, and basks in the philosophy of dominant masculinities and male ideology. As Harris (1998: 42) observes, Sabo and Panepinto (1990: 115), in their study of American Football, could just as easily have been referring to association football with their observation that:

> Football's historical prominence in sports media and folk culture has sustained a hegemonic model of masculinity that prioritises competitiveness, athleticism, success (winning), aggression, violence, superiority to women, and respect for the compliance with male authority.

Indeed, football manages to project masculine ideals by way of almost every component within its organisational structure. As Parker (2001: 59) indicates:

> Viewed either in terms of its occupational or social characteristics, English professional football is a strictly gendered affair. Its relational dynamics, its working practices, its commercial ventures, its promotional interests, are replete with images of maleness.

The gendered nature of professional, and indeed amateur, football may, in part, be explained by Morris (1981), who provides the most unique account of football culture I have encountered, which is founded upon the premise of the 'soccer tribe' being rooted in our primeval past, when our (male) ancestors lived and died as hunters of wild beasts. As we have evolved and technological innovations have transformed the way we live our lives, Morris argues, the physical and mental 'hunter qualities' have accordingly developed to meet the demands of the new environments, and humans – but particularly men – have gradually become more athletic and intelligent (see Morris, 1981: 10). Moreover, as farming came to be perceived as a more efficient method of food production than the hunt, '[men] still needed the challenge of the chase, the exciting tactical moves, the risks, the dangers, and the great climax of the kill' (p.10). As such, 'the hunt' continued as an early form of sport, providing an outlet for the primeval tribal hunter qualities of men. These tribal qualities, and fiercely territorial tribal identities, are still displayed in almost all aspects of modern football (Morris, 1981).

So football masculinities may be seen to be historically constructed – dating back much further than the gender differentiation in folk activities and the sports of the public schools – and the modern football player may be a 'tribal warrior' utilising football as an outlet for his psycho-social need to display his inherent physical and mental attributes that were once necessary for the hunt, and thus necessary for survival. Moreover, the 'tribal warrior' (player) 'fights' (plays) for personal status and the reputation and social standing of his tribe (team). Thus, the football match becomes both a ritual hunt and a stylised battle in a figurative war (Morris, 1981).

The 'sport as war' premise has received a great deal of academic attention in recent years (see especially Jansen and Sabo, 1994), with a particular focus in the UK on the sports media's role in promoting football as a apparatus for settling old scores with other countries (see for example Maguire, Poulton and Possamai, 1999). English professional football has long-standing rivalries with Argentina and Germany, due, in part, to the wars fought with these countries in the past.

Maguire, Poulton and Possamai (1999) remark that the English print media habitually raises the issue of the Second World War in the build-up to England versus Germany football matches, asserting the superiority of the England team through the nostalgia of earlier political and military pre-eminence. Likewise, the German media raises issues of the present political situation in Europe to assert their dominance. The England/Germany football fixture has become something of a symbolised battle, where nations affirm their masculinised status through their sporting performance (ibid).

These fierce 'tribal' rivalries are not limited to the national stage. As Russell (1999) acknowledges, football has proved a potent vehicle for the generation of territorial loyalties, contributing considerably to the articulation of a perceived 'North-South' divide within English society. However, territories have become far more restricted than this in recent years, where rivalries tend to be between one team and another. For example, Manchester United against Liverpool, and more recently Manchester United against Arsenal, is always a particularly passionate affair as two teams 'fighting' to be the best in English football. Also, there tend to be local rivalries, such as Arsenal against Tottenham and Everton against Liverpool, where the teams (and fans) 'battle' for the right to rule the territory.

Manifestations of hegemonic masculinity may also be internalised to the particular football institution, in its structures and procedures and among the values and actions of those people within it. Parker (2001) suggests that the everyday routines of professional football players serve to shape masculine identities, through 'official' and 'unofficial' institutional norms. 'Official' norms refers to the explicit and regulatory logic of the institution (football club), such as

the development of personal integrity, conscientiousness, discipline and a healthy 'professional attitude'. As Parker (2001: 61) indicates:

> Such values, in themselves, reflect a masculine working-class legacy, which has come to shape the historical contours of English professional football.

Alongside these ideals, however, players also develop in relation to numerous 'unofficial' behavioural norms and values, which collectively inform and encroach upon individual masculine constructions. These values, according to Parker (2001), are composed from the players' experiences concerning heterosexual relations, and wealth and consumption. Moreover, players are also influenced by exposure to, and obligatory involvement in, masculinised humour (e.g. homophobic, sexist and racist jokes and commentary) (Parker, 2001).

It is important to note here that Parker's (2001) work is an ethnographic case study of a particular professional football team – for which he uses the pseudonym 'Colby Town' – and the culture of this team is likely to have its own variety of hegemonic masculinity, beneath which there is a hierarchy of subordinate masculinities. Other football institutions, especially amateur football clubs and teams, are likely to revere different masculinities. For instance, ideals concerning wealth and consumption within an amateur culture, I would posit, may be of far less importance in the acquisition of hegemonic masculinity, due to the reduced financial resources of the players.

Nevertheless, football culture in general, despite the codification of the game developing in the public schools, is regularly associated with a traditional working-class masculinity (Holt, 1989; Mason, 1980; Parker, 2001; Phelps, 2001; Russell, 1999). The players' occupational sub-culture is dominated by the pursuit of cars, clothes, heavy drinking and sexual conquests, and even the playing aesthetics of football itself are seen to advocate a certain 'manliness'.

For instance, Harris (1998: 43) notes the abrasive style of play and intimidation tactics of Wimbledon FC's 'Crazy Gang' of the late 1980's and early 1990's, citing a recollection of former Wimbledon striker, John Fashanu, from the work of

Campbell and Shields (1993: 182), from the FA Cup Final of 1989 against Liverpool:

> When I looked into John Barnes's face I could see he was nearly crying before he went out. The only one who stood up to us was Steve McMahon as we knew he would. So, five minutes into the game he went for a tackle with Vinnie, whose tackle started at his neck and finished at his ankle, and that put him out.

John Fashanu (known throughout his career as 'Fash the Bash') and Vinnie Jones (referred to in the extract above) were renowned for their rough style of play. The tactics Fashanu refers to above may well have contributed to Wimbledon's shock FA Cup victory that year, and epitomised the masculinised façade of football. So called 'hard man' players are rife in football at all levels. Recent prominent examples include David Batty, Eric Cantona, Roy Keane, Stuart Pearce, and Dennis Wise, all of whom are (in)famous for their abrupt style and/or incidents of violence on or off the pitch.

These playing values have been a part of football for many years; Hopcraft (1988: 63-4) quotes star striker of the 1940's and 1950's, Derek Dooley, as saying, 'it's a man's game after all... players should accept a bit of boot'. Indeed, at times, it is clear to see why Morris (1981) likens football players to 'tribal warriors', given the exclusively male environment and the blatant displays of machismo, both on and off the field.

The 'off-field' behaviour of professional players is habitually reported upon by the tabloid media. The British public is presented with a wealth of knowledge (or gossip) about the lives' of football stars; from the images of David Beckham's latest fashion accessory or expensive new sports car, to the tiniest detail about Teddy Sheringham's 'raunchy' night on the town. More often than not, this media coverage caters almost exclusively to the 'male gaze', and reinforces associations of football and traditional masculinities. As Giulianotti (1999: 155) observes:

> The front pages of the tabloids 'expose' the sexual secrets of top stars; the back pages mix football stories with adverts for sex

> chat-lines, 'lap dancing' clubs and lingerie; inside, semi-nude female models pose provocatively in football regalia.

Throughout the recent history of football we have seen extensive media coverage of players 'misbehaving' on and off the field. Given the masculinised milieu of professional football, this is hardly surprising, and player misconduct in one form or another has become a common element of the game. Some players are more renowned for their 'rascality' than their football talent. George Best, for example, is often remembered as something of a 'loose canon'; a hard drinking womaniser, rather than one of the most technically gifted players of all time.

More recent examples include Roy Keane and Eric Cantona for their violence on the pitch (see Boyle and Haynes, 2000; Cashmore, 2000; Keane, 2002), Dennis Wise for violent conduct off the pitch (see Cashmore, 2000), and many members of the Leeds United team for alcohol related aggression and sexual misconduct (see O'Leary, 2001), none of whom have been seriously reproved for their behaviour. As Cashmore (2000: 224) propounds, football, and professional sport in general:

> Sometimes endorses or encourages physical violence or at least creates conditions under which the possibility of violence is heightened. It then covers that milieu with a sheltering canopy as if to prevent outsiders interfering with internal affairs [...] Change the context and the results would be completely different.

Yet in positing that football is a spawning ground for traditional, often aggressive, masculinities, and also an arena that protects these values, it appears as though most of these 'masculinised' instances occur off the pitch, or at least outside of the rules of the game. In reality, the characteristics and values of the football game may not adhere to traditional assumptions about 'manliness'.

Some Contradictions of Football and Hegemonic Masculinity

Football has received a great deal of academic attention over the past few decades, though few of these works have taken the time to critically analyse the construction of masculinities within football's playing environment. A notable

exception is the work of Parker (2001), whose study is something of a rarity in that it actually considers the subsistence of hegemonic masculinity, rather than simply taking it for granted that football demonstrates and reinforces traditional working-class values. Indeed, very few authors go far enough in their attempts to substantiate submissions of the masculinised football environment, and even fewer actually question it.

This is not to imply that football is a level playing field, nor that it rejects the traditional working-class masculinities. Indeed, I have attempted to demonstrate exactly the opposite throughout this section of the chapter. Football is undoubtedly a male preserve where traditional masculinities are born and nurtured. However, my argument is that the masculinised – or even hyper-masculinised – milieu of football that undeniably exists is founded upon nostalgia, and football itself has arguably become 'demasculinised' in recent years.

The first issue to highlight in this argument is the growth of the women's game. Evidence of women playing football dates back to the Victorian era (Hargreaves, 1994), though such occurrences were rare and football was generally considered to be 'off limits' to the majority of women (Holt, 1989; Mason, 1980). For the most part, these attitudes towards female participation in football have continued and are still prevalent today, yet women's football has made some progress in the latter half of the twentieth century, despite the fierce opposition. This progress includes the establishment of the Women's Football Association (WFA) in 1969, and the FA's acceptance of the female game and subsequent formation of a women's football committee in 1993 (Harris, 1998).

Today, women's football is one of the fastest growing sports in Britain. According to Knight (1999), FIFA estimate that there are some thirty million players worldwide, and the number of youth women's teams increased from eighty in 1990 to over one thousand in 1998. Furthermore, recent research has pointed to an increasing demand for football amongst schoolgirls (Sports Council for Wales, 1995), and 51 per cent of all secondary school girls have participated in football (Knight, 1999).

Women who play football are still met with resistance and stigma, and press coverage of the women's game continues to be poor. However, women are gradually moving into the male preserve of football; more and more are taking up the sport and attending Premiership football matches (Sir Norman Chester Centre, 1996 cited in Harris, 1998: 57), and in 2002 the women's FA Cup final was broadcast live for the first time on terrestrial television. It has been suggested that some of this evidence may point to the 'feminisation' of the game (see for example Coddington, 1997; Hargreaves, 1992). Indeed, no matter how much some men may deny or even actively resist it, football is no longer a male only sport.

Irrespective of the growth of female interest in football, the game has seemingly undergone a process of 'demasculinisation' in recent times. Morris (1981: 48-9) notes the difficult task facing the football referee:

> On the one hand he must protect the players from being maimed for life and yet, on the other, he cannot allow the game to lose its traditional toughness and manliness. It is his job, of course, and his main reason for existence, to prevent the hunt for goals from turning into a man-to-man battle, in which the main target of the kicking becomes the opponents' bodies rather than the goalmouth. But if he is constantly blowing his whistle at every minor clash, the game soon loses its appeal, not merely because it becomes fragmented, but also because it can rapidly decline from a vigorous sport into a pussyfoot pastime.

Morris's comments of some two decades ago scarcely have relevance today. He suggests that referees are forced to ignore all but the most blatant cases of illegal tackling, for fear of unduly 'softening' the game (Morris, 1981: 48). However, in watching any random English Premiership game of today, it is clear that this 'unwritten code' of the referee is no longer adhered to, and the 'traditional toughness and manliness' of the game that Morris refers to has become visibly diluted. Players on the receiving end of a tackle regularly fall to the ground immediately, often rolling around, seemingly in a great deal of distress. However, in most cases, the player concerned is on their feet again within seconds of being awarded the foul. Indeed, 'diving' has become a common part of football, particularly when a penalty kick may be the reward.

Other indications of the apparent 'softening' of football, and the subsequent contradiction to football and hegemonic masculinity, are also prevalent. Vinnie Jones, arguably, owes his success solely to his 'bad boy' reputation. Yet Anthony King (1996: 126) suggests that Jones was created by the media, 'nothing more than a liminal commodity, pre-packaged for the headlines'. King argues that, while Vinnie Jones may have been a determined and durable player, he was not especially dirty, and most of his dismissals were for late or clumsy tackles caused by his determination. Indeed, Vinnie himself questions the 'hard man' image he obtained as a football player, highlighting his 'unseen' side as a loving husband and father, and noting that his football talent has been unfairly disregarded (Jones, 1998).

Alongside this apparent misrepresentation of Jones, football has also seen the rise to stardom of a perceived emasculated player, David Beckham. The 'character' of English football, according to King (1996), is often referred to by way of the qualities that the working-class recognise as part of its cultural identity – traditional patriarchal values. David Beckham does not appear to have any of these qualities, except perhaps for the fact that he is an accomplished football player and is heterosexual. His football skills have earned him the England captaincy and a club salary that rivals any professional football player, as well as inspiring the hit film, *Bend it Like Beckham*. He is married to former Spice Girl, Victoria 'Posh' Adams, but it is Victoria who has been reputed to fulfil the dominant role in the relationship.

Beckham has also received a great deal of media scorn and ridicule for his alleged 'effeminate' dress sense. The most infamous media image of David Beckham is, arguably, the photograph of him wearing a sarong in 1999. More recently he has received attention from the English tabloids for painting his fingernails and wearing a hair band, for which he endured front-page derision from the *Sun*: 'the England skipper's soccer skills may have inspired the hit film Bend it Like Beckham – but he keeps scoring own goals with his dress sense' (Smith, 2002).

Despite his unashamed rejection of traditional working class masculinities and the media mockery he receives in return, David Beckham remains a football hero in England, seemingly adored by all Englishmen and a role model for the nations (male) youth (see Clayton and Harris, 2002, 2003). Indeed, Beckham may symbolise the demasculinisation of football in Britain more than any other factor discussed in this section (see also Cashmore, 2002; Cashmore and Parker, 2003; Whannel, 2002)

Collegiate Football Masculinities: Sport and 'Fashionable Promiscuity'

Condensing the discussion of football masculinities into a discussion of collegiate football masculinities is not an easy task. Collegiate sport in Britain does not have the same appeal or organisational structure as it does in the United States and, as such, receives relatively little attention in the media and academic literature. This may be because sportsmen and women in Britain embark upon their professional careers at a much earlier age, harvested from school sport participation rather than from universities. This inevitably reduces the cultural importance of football and in British universities, where it remains non-elite and, on the surface at least, played solely for leisure. It is, therefore, fair to suggest that the masculinity imperatives of collegiate football in Britain differ from those of professional football and collegiate sports across the Atlantic. Identifying this differentiation, however, is hampered by the distinct lack of academic interest in collegiate football as a gendered sub-culture.

At a glance the differences between professional and collegiate football would seem to emerge from issues of occupation, celebrity and conspicuous consumption. University football players are unlikely to obtain any fame beyond that of their peers and are far less likely to enjoy fiscal immoderation; both of which may be considered symbolic of masculinity. This is not to suggest that athletic status and 'chic' acquisition are not ranking factors in the gender order of university football, but they are likely to be dynamically different or diluted to those of the affluent professional locale.

Indeed, the meaning of being a student in Britain at the present time establishes a unique context for the act of football, and all its sub-activities, to take place. At a

rhetorical, even clichéd, level, the student experience remains one of carefree indolence, self-exploration, and periodic revelry, for those of a particular economic and cultural disposition. Yet with a changing socio-economic climate and the closer integration of advanced education and the economy, the rapid move from an elite to a mass system of Higher Education in Western societies is well documented (e.g. Barnett, 1994; Lewis, 2002; Scott, 1995; Webster, 2000). In Britain, university courses have gone 'from marginality to incorporation in the social mainstream' (Barnett, 1994: 4), and Higher Education has seen numerous changes since the mid-1980s, such as the growth in student enrolment and, particularly, the Labour government's commitment to 'widen participation' in university education (DfES, 2003) and, effectively, challenge and overcome the inequalities evident in the traditional, middle-class, Higher Education structure (Gordon, 1995). While university participation remains predominantly middle-class (managerial and professional), other socio-economic groups are rapidly becoming more visible in the HE sector (Callender and Wilkinson, 2003) and, as a result, the student experience is heterogeneous (Webster, 2000).

Harris (2004) argues that the concept of learning and the notion of 'graduateness' are also undergoing a process of considerable change, as the expansion of courses in areas such as sport and leisure, and the 'oversupply' of graduates in these areas, has brought about new pressures for students. Consequently, there is new pressure on universities to provide 'practical' experience and, particularly in sports related courses, address their provision of sport to meet the demands of the student. Sports related courses tend to be overwhelmingly (young) male dominated (see for example Humberstone and Kirby, 2003), all with a background in amateur sport and a familiarity with male athletic subcultures. At BCUC, these men's preconceptions about university life reflected a similarly masculinised athletic culture, where provision for participation in football, and in the related subculture, were requisite. Indeed, the social aspect of student life in Western cultures, across all fields of study, is strongly associated with alcohol and revelry (see Berkowitz and Perkins, 1986; Brennan *et al*, 1986; Goodwin, 1989; Leemon, 1972), and male students tend to be the main participants (Berkowitz and Perkins, 1987; Eagly, 1978; Harris and Ide, 2000). One need only consider the noticeable promotion of campus and local provision for alcohol use in the

prospectuses and on the websites of UK universities and colleges to establish the ubiquity and importance of drinking culture for students. Particularly with the introduction of fee-paying students in Britain, the issue of student debt is a high priority for the government (DfES, 2004), yet expenditure on alcohol is the most costly element of student life, and is continuing to rise (Callender and Wilkinson, 2003). Aside from the issue of loans and debts, the recognition of student drinking practices has also raised questions about student health (see Harris, 2004; Harris and Ide, 2000), and in America (though less so in the UK) alcohol-related anti-social behaviour among students has been a concern for many years (e.g. Connell, 1985; Engs and Hanson, 1987).

The term 'fashionable promiscuity' was coined by Harris and Ide (2000) to describe the sociological contributors to poor student health. Here, it was argued that the physical condition of university students suffers because many health compromising (promiscuous) behaviours are regarded as 'defining characteristics of being a student' (2000: 36) and, moreover, that the majority of students are at an age where 'social acceptance is imperative [and] the pressure to conform to the norm is very high' (ibid: 36). Of particular interest is Harris and Ide's observation that university sports teams (ironically) are often the greatest exponents of many of these behaviours (behaviours such as smoking, binge drinking, 'recreational' drug use, 'unhealthy' eating, and sexual pervasiveness). We may draw a parallel between some of these student athlete (mis)behaviours and those reported behaviours of professional football players (e.g. drinking and sexual pervasiveness) and draw a distinction between others (e.g. smoking). But if we extend the bounds of fashionable promiscuity, from the purely health-related features, to a more inclusive model of all culturally licentious activities, there arises an interesting juxtaposition between football and collegiate cultures. Both may be seen to encompass a 'protective umbrella', under which certain misdemeanours, such as excessive drinking, sexual misconduct and acts of violence, are tolerated and explained away as a cultural facet.

Summary

This chapter has mapped out the nurturance of a traditional, competitive, (hetero)sexist masculinity in British football, from its roots as a popular folk

activity through to the globalised, modern game. In order to gain some understanding of football's particular brand of hegemonic masculinity, it may be necessary to sub-divide its character, for analytical purposes at least, into behavioural codes and values that are directly and indirectly concerned with the sport. That is to say, a thorough review of existing research discloses a distinct typological line between problems and issues concerning masculinity in regard of football's organisational context and playing values, and the sub-cultural problems and issues.

Direct footballing masculinities tend to reflect issues of aggressive competitiveness and stringent autocracy and discipline, (potentially) leading to problems such as 'legal' and 'non-legal' violence on the pitch, hooliganism, injury and the use of performance enhancing drugs. Sub-cultural, indirect masculinities, often reflect an affluent celebrity lifestyle of conspicuous consumption, and a highly (hetero)sexualised, homophobic and aggressive/violent carousing life-style. The culmination of these direct and indirect football masculinities, as this chapter has suggested, produce and reproduce a culture of hegemonic masculinity and legitimise men's patriarchal control.

Despite some emerging challenges and contradictions to football and hegemonic masculinity – the purported 'feminisation' of the game – professional football continues to be a potent spawning ground for ideological male attitudes and behaviour patterns (see especially Parker, 1996c). However, it would be naïve to suggest that collegiate football harbours the same values as its professional counterpart, because there are numerous cultural variations in terms of closure, workplace pressure and, indeed, the chief objectives of the participants. Moreover, the affluence of the participants is also likely to be poles apart. Notwithstanding this, there may be several parallels between professional football and university sub-cultures, rendering collegiate football a similarly persuasive environment for male hegemony as the professional game. Literature concerning collegiate football, and other sports, in Britain, or anywhere outside of the USA, is scarce. Thus, this particular group of men is unexplored sociological terrain, necessitating a strong theoretical framework (see chapter 2) and a credible methodological approach, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

# Chapter 5:

# Exploring the Pitch: Methodological Frame

To begin with, this chapter provides a brief debate as to the nature of research, considering and validating my philosophical and methodological position and providing a clear statement about the nuances of the ethnographic approach to research. Later in the chapter I expand upon this base, taking a developmental and applied approach, becoming more explicit about the methods used, showing how the data was produced and analysed and how the study evolved over time. Through this approach I also evoke a tangible research context, communicating a plausible and 'real' setting within which the reader may be able to locate him or herself.

In doing this, I am reflexive and honest, foregrounding my own voice and illuminating concerns and problems encountered as the research developed. Such an approach may be understood as a 'confessional tale' (Sparkes, 2002; Van Maanen, 1988), in that it personalises methodological dilemmas and judgments, eliciting the tensions in the process and showing how the work came into being. In keeping with the 'alternative' tradition, many sections of this chapter are low on theoretical jargon, and instead are shaped by my own knowledge and experiences, field notes, and formal and informal conversations with colleagues and informants.

As the theoretical framework for this study developed, a provisional, broad-ranging research question was formed:

> Given the position of collegiate football in the UK and the heterogeneity of students in HE, and considering the multiplicity of masculinity and its manifestation as a collective practice, what constitutes masculine identity in the collegiate football arena, how is it constructed, and how is it played out?

Such a question could only be comprehensively answered by immersing myself in the world of male collegiate football, by taking an ethnographic approach. Ethnography has been very significant in the development of a sociology of gender and sociology of sport in recent years, capturing, interpreting and explaining how social groups live, experience and make sense of their lives and their world (Robson, 2002). Typically, ethnographic research answers questions about specific groups or about specific aspects of the life of a particular group, and involves the immersion of the researcher in the setting. In this study, ethnography is used to make sense of the life-world of male collegiate football players and, particularly, the ways in which their masculinities are constructed and played out. Participant observation and semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data and data analysis was undertaken throughout the process. This chapter concerns itself, in the main, with describing this process and all the nuances of ethnographic fieldwork in this setting. The fieldwork commenced midway through the 2001-02 university football season, and the data was produced over a period of three seasons. In the first year of study, my primary aim was to simply '[get] the seat of [my] pants dirty in real research' (Park, 1915 cited in Burgess, 1982: 6). This was a pilot study; an opportunity to acclimatise to the pressures of ethnographic fieldwork and forecast and 'iron out' any problems prior to embarking upon the 'real thing'. The bulk of the data were collected over the full football season of my second year of study (2002-03), and fieldwork continued as a concomitant activity in the third year (2003-04). For the purposes of this chapter, however, I refer to fieldwork conducted during the 2002-03 season, unless otherwise stated. All first names used in this chapter, and thereafter, are pseudonyms for the purposes of maintaining the anonymity of all those concerned.

## Making Sense of Research

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) purport that the primary goal of research is the production of knowledge. Moreover, it is about the augmentation or broadening of the current knowledge base. My aim in conducting this research is to 'open eyes' to an area that, for the most part, is known only within its own protective milieu, though theories of masculinities have been candidly articulated and applied to other social arenas. There exists very little information about the

'realm' of football players, and especially collegiate football players, while football itself has received a great deal of academic attention. My objective here, according to Silverman (1993: 3), should be to say 'a lot about a little', rather than the 'cop-out' of saying 'a little about a lot'. In this vein, my research is concerned with highlighting aspects of the life world of male collegiate football players through a rich, reminiscent, and necessarily subjective narrative.

Research is best described as something that is 'produced', rather than 'collected', as this acknowledges the role of the researcher in the process (Dey, 1993). Indeed, in conducting research I have become fully aware that the process is not just concerned with the discovery of new knowledge, but is also a journey of self-discovery and critical reflection. I remember from my time researching for my undergraduate dissertation upon the representation of sporting masculinities in the media – my first 'real' research experience – how much I learned about my own locatedness in the social world, and the advantageous, yet often problematic, position I was in as a white, middle-class, heterosexual male, and the impacts this may have had upon the research outcome. Indeed, my 'being' contributed as much to the sociological significance of the research as the subject of the investigation itself.

Whether it is aligned with the natural sciences or social sciences, the 'research act' necessitates human contribution, which is often overlooked in the process of evaluation. Sayer (1992) purports that, rather than being passive, the relationship between knowledge and practice may actually be interactive, in that people and their ideas are included in what constitutes human knowledge. The unfortunate reality for much of the social sciences, however, is that the researcher becomes detached from the actuality of the circumstance in 'writing-up' the investigation (Sparkes, 2002). This has important ramifications for the research process in that much of the feeling is lost and, consequently, much of the 'reality' is lost also, inhibiting the generation of knowledge. 'Social facts', according to Morrow (1994: 9), are qualitatively different from the 'facts' of nature because they are created and re-created by our own actions as human beings. Perhaps, then, Morrow's (1994: 9) terminology, 'social facts', may be seen to be erroneous as, by definition, it ignores the individuality and variability of human sentiment and

the significance of this in the social sciences. Social research is rarely involved with the production of 'facts', rather it is commonly seen as the broadening or deepening of current knowledge. Indeed, it seems inappropriate for social research to allude to what Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 17) term 'naïve forms of realism', which assume that knowledge must be based on some absolutely secure foundation.

Research, then, should not be concerned with what is 'true' and what is not, rather it is the discovery of the significance of these 'truths' that is the real aim of research, and we (as social researchers) must critically examine some aspect of human behaviour in order to achieve our goals (Dane, 1990: 5). As Anderson, Hughes and Sharrock (1985) articulate, there is much more to the saying of some things about the world than they are merely true. If we only concentrate on whether our work is 'true' in a sense of corresponding to reality, we sell ourselves short and should also worry about significance (McCutcheon, 1990).

Methodological Overview

Crotty (1998) describes methodology as the research design that shapes our choice and use of particular methods and links them to the desired outcomes. Methodology, however, is rarely this straightforward, and can never be clear if viewed in these simplistic terms. The research framework, according to Crotty (1998), consists of four sequential elements: methods, methodology, theoretical perspective, and epistemology. Epistemology informs the theoretical perspective, which in turn informs the methodology and the choice of tools (methods) within the methodology. Here, the rationale for the researcher's choice of methods is itself rationalised by the way in which the researcher looks upon the world and the underlying principles of the possibilities and legitimacies of knowledge itself. Moreover, 'field research', particularly, depends upon a variety of theoretical positions with very different implications (Silverman, 1993). Thus, when we talk of methodological problems, it may be that there is an overemphasis on the structure of our research, and appropriate methodologies may be best learned by simply 'doing' the research (Burgess, 1982; Burns, 2000).

This is not to suggest that the budding researcher should 'throw caution to the wind' in approaching a research problem. Veal (1997) emphasises the importance of a thorough literature review in order to gain the competence necessary to 'do' research and avoid the risk of causing harm to subjects, abusing the subjects' goodwill, and wasting precious time and resources. As Punch (1994) asserts, for the inexperienced researcher, the emphasis upon just 'doing it' must not be viewed as a sanction to 'run riot' and be unperturbed about the consequences, as 'the neophyte researcher can unwittingly become an unguided projectile bringing turbulence to the field' (Punch, 1994: 83).

Something that I will show in the course of this study is that, while a little thinking beforehand is always prudent, research is learned by 'doing'. Early on in the 'PhD process', I spent day after day reading about research and the usefulness and application of particular methods. This, for the most part, was of little use to me, primarily because of the lack of thought and subsequent 'impenetrable jargon' (Atkinson, 1990: 1) in many sociological and, particularly, methodological texts. After a sizeable amount of reading, I was more than capable of persuasively reeling-off the same indecipherable terminology that had been presented to me, but was largely ignorant as to what it actually meant.

With this in mind, prior to my focal enquiry, I took the opportunity to conduct a pilot study towards the end of the 2001/2002 university football season. This consisted of a five-week period over which I attending training sessions with the BCUC team, and observed the team under the cover of being an undergraduate student keen to play football. Through this approach, the somewhat bewildering phraseology of many methodological authors became significantly less ambiguous, as I was able to relate it to instances 'in the field', or develop my own alternative perspectives. Two extracts from my field diary, just three weeks apart, demonstrate how much I learned from this brief period of actually 'doing' research, rather than simply reading about it:

> My apprehensiveness going into the training session was proved to be justified as I quickly realised my own research incompetence [...] I found myself lost as to what to be doing, what to be looking for and, particularly, how to conduct myself

> and establish 'field relations' [...] I have already encountered numerous problems of practicality, such as simply how to record my observations in an unobtrusive manner, and problems in terms of what to actually record and what not to.
>
> (Field Diary, 14th Jan 2002)

> There are definite themes beginning to develop within the team [...] In acknowledging these themes and gaining a better understanding of their significance, it is easier to identify related themes and behaviours and I am beginning to not only remember but also reflect upon and analyse my observations as and when they occur [...] This is useful in that it helps me to remember the incident when I come to record it later and allows me to intuitively categorise the behaviours and establish some kind of observational framework [...] I am no longer making any gruelling effort to observe, rather I find myself doing it naturally while training. Indeed, I regularly find myself sociologically scrutinising almost every aspect of my life [...] it is difficult to 'walk away' from the research mindset.
>
> (Field Diary, 4th Mar 2002)

Social research is inherently serendipitous and, therefore, issues of methodologies must reflect this. Thus, in addition to reading and theorising, my methodological stance for this case study was developed from experiences of 'doing' the research.

The Paradigms Debate

Sparkes (1992) suggests that paradigms are perhaps best viewed as being particular sets of lenses for seeing the world, and making sense of it in different ways. This interpretation implies a less problematic association between the paradigms and, in my opinion, allows for interpretative differences within any one paradigm. In this sense, the word 'perspective' may be more applicable than 'paradigm', as these are less well-developed systems than the latter, and can be more easily moved between (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994a).

My own research draws upon the beliefs of constructivism, which some authors consider to be a paradigm in itself (e.g. Guba, 1990), but, as Schwandt (1994) acknowledges, it is better categorised as an all-encompassing term, which aims to understand and find meaning in the world by interpreting it. This itself serves as recognition that I utilise a number of interpretive perspectives in this study, including pro-feminism and phenomenology. These perspectives are placed

together relatively unproblematically because they converge in rejecting the values of positivism (Guba, 1990).

Within the current dialogue regarding appropriate research methods, I am at ease within the broad philosophy espoused by the interpretative perspective. I will now go on to justify this position by clarifying what is meant by the interpretive perspective and suggesting why it is suitable for my work, but first critiquing the historically dominant paradigm in the research of sport and physical activity, the positivistic approach, and its successor, post-positivism.

Positivism and Post-Positivism

Hammersley (1989) refers to positivism as a combination of three fundamental principles. Firstly, positivists' central aim is to identify universal laws in the study of the social world. Secondly, positivism restricts knowledge to experience, where acknowledgement of the external world is placed outside the boundaries of the knowable. The third component of positivism, according to Hammersley, is the view that science represents the most valid form of human knowledge.

The ultimate aim of science is to predict and control natural phenomena (Guba, 1990). Conducive to this testimony, within the larger discussion of history and science, the positivistic approach has come to mean, 'objective enquiry based on measurable variables and probable propositions' (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994: 3). On an ontological level, the positivistic approach has been described as realism, in that it seeks 'truths', and asserts that reality exists 'out there' and is driven by immutable natural laws and mechanisms (Guba, 1990: 20). This view has been extensively criticised, and labelled as a 'naïve' way of looking at the world (see for example Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). The subsequent 'paradigm shift' has seen an increase in the use of the interpretative approach to work in physical education and sport, as well as general move towards post-positivism in some research domains that were formerly positivistic.

Post-positivism has developed alongside other alternative paradigms. The post-positivistic approach and the interpretative approach are united in their rejection of positivism, but are nevertheless divided in what they espouse. According to

Guba (1990), post-positivism is best characterised as a modified version of positivism, which aims to limit the shortcomings of the objectivist approach while continuing the aim of prediction and control. Ontologically, post-positivism maintains that reality exists, but suggests that it can never be fully comprehended and the natural laws that drive our world can never be completely understood (Guba, 1990: 23). Here we can see that post-positivists do not really reject positivism, rather they merely acknowledge its inadequacies in social science. Indeed, post-positivists often subscribe to the notion that the 'hard' and 'soft' science approaches are both applicable in different circumstances (Garrison, 1986).

Positivism and post-positivism, then, are characterised by their scientific, objectivist and realist stance. While post-positivism emphasises the need to be critical of the ontology, epistemology and methodology of such a posture, it still works within the boundaries of the structured, 'hard' sciences. The interpretive approach, in contrast, values the 'soft', unstructured and subjectivist basic belief system. Traditionally, particularly within the fields of sport and physical education, the former has been more highly valued than the latter, though, more recently, the interpretive approach has made great strides forward, particularly through pro-feminist sociology of sport.

The Interpretive Approach

Schwandt (1994) tells us that interpretivism stems from the German intellectual tradition of hermeneutics and the *Verstehen* tradition in sociology (emphasis on understanding), and the phenomenology of Schutz. According to Patton (1990), phenomenology simply asks, 'what is the structure and essence of experience of this phenomenon for these people'. At base, the interpretive inquirer watches, listens, asks, records, and examines (Schwandt, 1994).

In stark contrast to the positivistic and post-positivistic perspectives, the ontology and epistemology of interpretivism declares that reality is actively constructed, rather than simply 'out there', and the 'known' is mind-dependant and, thus, cannot be isolated from the 'knower'. Hammersley (1989: 27) notes that within the interpretive perspective, we 'draw out of our experience the ideas and beliefs

from which the expressions and behaviour we are studying arose'. In order to achieve this, the interpretivist must place more reliance upon the people being studied to provide explanations of behaviour or phenomena, and try to see the world from the subjects' point of view (Veal, 1997).

For that reason, the interpretive approach to research is necessarily individualistic, and is characterised by the assumption that one can only interpret the meaning of something from some perspective or standpoint (Patton, 1990). Interpretivism assumes the social world is made up of 'persons', rather than 'people', in that each individual has had, and does have, very personalised interactions with the world around them. By its very nature, the interpretive approach assumes this of both the subject(s) of research and the researcher. Maykut and Morehouse (1994: 13) articulate the nature of interpretive research thus:

> Values are embedded in the research, embedded in the topic chosen for examination, in the way the researcher examines the topic and in the researcher him or herself.

There are numerous research perspectives that may fall under this categorisation, some of which may be considered as research paradigms of their own. My own research is influenced by a number of these positions and, without meaning to calculatedly situate my theoretical approach, my work overlaps what may be considered the paradigms of constructivism and critical theory. The pro-feminist stance, for example, upon which much of my analysis is based, may be considered constructivist in that it habitually disregards the values of positivism and is ontologically relativist, but it may also fall under the label of critical theory in that it is ideologically orientated (see Guba, 1990).

Both the constructivist and critical theorist perspectives maintain epistemological subjectivity, and the multitude of schools of thought within each (e.g. feminism, cultural studies, phenomenology, symbolic interactionism) are characterised by a considerable overlap. Thus, following the lead of Sparkes (1992), I refer to my work throughout as interpretive, which, I suggest, is an inclusive term, acknowledging the rejection of positivism but also highlighting, but not affirming, a similitude amongst various non-positivistic approaches.

The interpretive approach can be categorised under the more general designation of qualitative inquiry. Denzin and Lincoln (1994b) suggest that qualitative research has been characterised by key 'moments' in history, and that we are currently in the fifth 'moment', which can be broadly categorised as 'post-modern'. Post-modernism, according to Agger (1996), focuses upon the crisis of representation, which alludes to the predestined 'undecidability' in discourses of contemporary, capitalist society. Consequently, searches for 'grand narratives' are now slowly being replaced by more local small-scale theories, which are fitted to the specifics of any study (Lincoln, 1993). This study, via its interpretive approach, does not concern itself with broadly applicable laws of sports related masculinities and/or male-dominated spheres, but aims instead for a rich, descriptive analysis, and a narrative of my experiences 'in the field'. Within this approach, however, I acknowledge the importance of my own role in the field, and the need to critically explore this role.

Ethnography

The term 'ethnography' takes it's meaning from the Greek words of *ethno* (people) and *graphy* (writing), and, at its simplest, is a tool for describing a culture in a qualitative, interpretive sense. It is now a widely used method in many emerging social science fields as well as the traditional fields of sociology and political science, but was previously the sole possession of anthropology (Sands, 2002).

Ethnography, however, is a much-abused term. It is often used as a synonym for qualitative research as a whole, and virtually describes any approach as ethnographic that avoids surveys as a means of data collection. In this sense, as Wolcott (1973) connotes, ethnography is really a perspective on research rather than a way of doing it. Others define ethnography as one particular way of doing qualitative research; as 'field research' or 'fieldwork' (Brewer, 2000). This characterisation, according to Burgess (1982: 15):

> Involves the study of real-life situations. Field researchers therefore observe people in the settings in which they live, and participate in their day to day activities. The methods that can

> be used in these studies are unstructured, flexible and open-ended.

I am comfortable with Burgess's summary of ethnographic inquiry and, for me, ethnography is best characterised by the study of people, within a particular context, for the purpose of discovering and describing their socio-cultural activities and patterns. However, even in this case, ethnography is more than just a way of collecting data. Rather, it concerns itself with the actual fieldwork and method of data collection, the analysis of the collected data, and the 'writing-up' of the study. Ethnography, then, satisfactorily corresponds to the nuances of the interpretive approach, in that it aligns itself with the methodological quintessence of individualistic interpretation and understanding.

This, however, is where many of the critiques of ethnography are founded. According to Brewer (2000: 19), the ethnographic method is reputed to fall short of the standards of 'orthodox consensus' (see Giddens, 1996), which suggests that the social sciences should be modelled on positivism. The principal feature of ethnography, which gains such widespread criticism from the more traditional social scientists, is the requirement for the researcher to be a variable within the experiment. The ethnographer is not detached from the research and is, rather, a part of the study and, thus, comes to influence the field.

It is in this way, however, that the ethnographer captures the 'true feeling' and nature of human social behaviour (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994; Kanpol, 1997), by experiencing the emotionality of the environment first-hand (Harris, 1997). This is not to dismiss the positivistic view of the shortcomings of ethnography. Indeed, there is a fundamental importance placed upon acknowledging the reflexive character of social research. What the advocates of positivism often fail to recognize, however, is that all social research relies upon a certain amount of participant observation and, therefore, the researcher is always a part of the social world they study (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994). Orientations of researchers will undoubtedly be shaped by their socio-historical locations, but, far from undermining their commitment to realism, this only undermines 'naïve forms of realism', which assume that knowledge must be based on some absolutely secure foundation (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995: 16-17).

Ethnography is an approach to research that utilises an eclectic range of methods, triangulating data from many different sources from within the social world. This study utilises participant observation and semi-structured interview, as well as some document analysis. I use ethnography as a 'style' of research that is defined by its objectives, which are to gain an understanding of the social meanings of phenomena that occur within the football team.

The Ethnographic Tools

This study uses a combination of participant observation, conversation analysis, semi-structured interview and, to a lesser extent, document analysis for its data collection. According to Brewer (2000) triangulation was traditionally associated with positivist notions of ethnography, as a procedure for improving the correspondence between the analysis and the 'reality' that it sought to represent faithfully. In defence of my selected multiple-methods I offer this suggestion: Each method offers a slightly different perspective on the same symbolic 'reality' and, perhaps more importantly, allows access to data that may not have been obtainable through the other selected methods. For example, I utilise my semi-structured interviews not only to support observations I have made 'in the field', but also to obtain information in a separate, but related, line of inquiry. More specifically, my interviews are principally concerned with topical life stories and issues of socialisation, which would be difficult, if not impossible, to access through observation alone. Thus, the data triangulation, here, is not used as a form of validity, but as an alternative to validation, in that the most appropriate method is used for each situation or need, which Burgess (1982: 163) terms 'methodological pragmatism'.

Participant observation is habitually the data collection method most closely associated with ethnography, and it is also the one that holds the most points for deliberation. The principal consideration, here, is what actually constitutes participant observation, and what sets it aside from non-participant observation. A distinction is sometimes made by way of former referring to observation carried out when the researcher plays an established participant role in the scene being studied. However, while this simplistic dichotomy gainfully recognises the

variation in the roles adopted by the observer, it seems to imply that the non-participant observer plays no recognised role at all (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994).

It has been argued that all social research is a form of participant observation, because we cannot study the social world without being a part of it (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). A widely used guide to 'pin down' the locatedness of the observer is Gold's (1958) fourfold typology – *complete observer*, *observer-as-participant*, *participant-as-observer*, or *complete participant*. The complete observer and complete participant represent the 'extremes', where the former is entirely removed from the scene, and the latter's true identity and purpose are not known to those whom he observes (Gold, 1958). It is probably fair to say that most researchers fall somewhere in between these two categories.

My role as an observer of the BCUC football team is probably best characterised as 'participant-as-observer' in that, while I participated as a member of the team during training and at social functions, the football players under study and myself were aware that ours was a field relationship (see Gold, 1958). I was, however, not comfortable with this 'labelling' of my role, not least because my approach to the research is likely to change depending on the context. Indeed, as with many other sports ethnographies (see Sands, 2002), there were multitudinous research environments such as training sessions, matches and social gatherings. In some of these surroundings, specifically at the football matches and during interviews, my position changed to align itself with the 'observer-as-participant' role, which, according to Gold (1958), is markedly different from 'participant-as-observer' in that it calls for relatively more formal observation than either informal observation or participation of any kind.

Thus, participant observation may be seen to be a method of data collection that necessitates adaptability in the field, with the broad objective of exploring the life-world of a particular group from within. The way in which the observer goes about achieving this objective is reliant upon a degree of methodological pragmatism, in that his or her role or approach may need to be modified for each field context.

Within this ethnography (as alluded to previously) I also incorporate semi-structured interviews and conversation analysis. The latter accounts for a considerable measure of the data of the overall behaviours of the football players, and is incorporated into the participant observation method in that it occurs within the contexts that are under exploration. Indeed, rarely is conversation analysis (also referred to as natural language, talk analysis and discourse analysis) explained or described outside of the confines of participant observation, but it is argued by some that it is a data collection technique in itself (see Brewer, 2000; see also Curry, 1991; Jimerson, 2002).

The other method utilised within this study is the semi-structured interview. In its simplest form, the interview may be defined as a data collection method that uses a verbal stimulus (the question) to elicit a verbal response (the answer) from a respondent, or set of respondents (Brewer, 2000). The semi-structured interview takes the form of 'natural conversation', skilfully guided or focussed by the researcher. This is not always an easy task; as Brewer (2000: 66) suggests, it requires a variety of social and research skills:

> The interviewer needs to be able to sustain and control conversation, to know when to probe, prompt and when to listen and remain silent, and to read the social cues from respondents and know when to stop pushing a line of questioning.

These skills run parallel to the skills needed for participant observation, which may be a reason why the two methods are so regularly shared. There are distinct advantages in combining participant observation with interviews; in particular, the data from each can be used to illuminate the other. Moreover, Dexter (1970)

notes that one's experience as a participant observer can have an important effect on how one interprets what people say in interviews.

The differences between participant observation and interviewing are not as great as is sometimes suggested. In both cases, according to Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 141), 'we must take account of context and of the effects of the researcher. There are other parallels too. Thus, both the participant observer and the interviewer need to build rapport'.

In combining the two data collection methods, it is likely that there will be a certain rapport in the interviews, carried over from the relationships and the empathy founded through the participant observation. Though, it is important to consider that, perhaps, a different rapport is needed for the interview process, than the process of observation, in light of the dissimilarity in the context. Issues such as these will be discussed throughout the remainder of the chapter.

In the Field: The Research Context

Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College (BCUC), formerly Buckinghamshire College, was established as an independent Higher Education Corporation within the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council (PCFC) sector in April 1989, and joined the federation of University Colleges, formed by Brunel University, in1992. When I joined the college in November 2001, it had become a separate University College, having achieved that status in 1997.

The college is divided into three campuses: the main site in the centre of High Wycombe; the Wellesbourne campus located on the outskirts of the town; and the Chalfont campus at neighbouring Chalfont St. Giles. Although I was based at the Wellesbourne campus, this research was carried out at all three sites at different times. Training sessions took place on the Astroturf pitches at the Chalfont campus, the matches were played on the pitches that encircled the Wellesbourne campus, and nights out with the players tended to conclude (and, more often than not, commence) at the Student's Union, located on the main site.

The Wellesbourne campus houses the Faculty of Leisure and Tourism, where students can undertake, among others, numerous HE courses in sports related disciplines. Perhaps unsurprisingly, therefore, it was on this site that the majority of the team studied, and I would come into contact with many of them on a daily basis. My role at Wellesbourne was first and foremost as a post-graduate student, having accepted a research bursary to conduct sport masculinities related research. As a means of further financing, and for the invaluable experience I gained from it, I took a secondary role as a part-time lecturer. In fulfilling both of these roles, the Wellesbourne campus became my base, and my 'identity' to both staff and students primarily became one of a staff member within the faculty.

Acquired by the college in 1994, the Wellesbourne campus is located on an old school site and, with approximately 1000 students based there, it is an intimate academic setting. This, as I saw it, was a great advantage, particularly in terms of the 'hidden' aspects of research. Research is indeed a lonely and often stressful business, but within such a familiar and friendly environment it was easy to 'escape' for a coffee and non-research related tête-à-tête with another member of staff – an invaluable resource to me throughout the research process.

The closeness of this setting, however, also created some problems. It frequently became very claustrophobic, and I often found myself needing to take days away from it. How I spent these days away varied from simply working at home, or spending the day at the main site library, to hopping in my car and taking 'time out' with just my thoughts and some carefully selected 'driving music'. My reasoning for conveying what may seem to be extraneous information, such as the above, is not to gain sympathy, but is to provide both a 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) of the research setting and attempt to communicate some of the emotions and feelings encountered throughout the research process.

Indeed, in a reflective, ethnographic project such as this one, these factors may have a significant bearing on the configuration of the final submission, and within any ethnographic work it is important to 'locate' the study within a conceivable, tangible context (Van Maanen, 1988). The information I offer here and throughout this section (and, indeed, throughout this chapter) is an attempt to

provide the reader with this material environment. I do this now by introducing the football team and describing the three primary locations where this observation took place.

All ethnographies share the common purpose of capturing the finer details and sentiments of a particular cultural context, and exploring the behavioural nuances of the individuals within it (see for example Brandes, 1980; Peristiany, 1966). In placing themselves in an unfamiliar environment, ethnographers embark upon an intensely personal experience. Each individual study and each individual ethnographer is likely to be markedly different, and the specifics of the research context, as well as the researcher role, need to be made clear in order for any outside comments to be passed. My choice of research setting and subject matter was primarily built around an opportunity presented to me by way of being offered a research bursary at BCUC. Already having a keen interest in sporting cultures, and football in particular, my association with the university college allowed me to 'slip a foot in the door' (Fetterman, 1991: 93) and gain access to the BCUC football teams.

Spradley (1980) suggests five factors for consideration in selecting a research site: simplicity, accessibility, unobtrusiveness, permissibility, and participation. While acknowledging Morses's (1994) warning against conducting qualitative research in familiar settings, principally for the practical and ethical issues this can generate, my new-found position at BCUC, coupled with my personal attributes, promisingly supported Spradley's considerations.

It is not enough, however, to simply suggest that the site for this case study is the university college, or even the football team at the university college. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) note, within any setting people may distinguish between a number of quite different contexts that require different kinds of behaviour. Indeed, the behaviour of the players often differed markedly between the training field, the football pitch and the Student's Union. It is also important not to mistake places for contexts, and remember that architectural structures are merely 'props used in the social drama', and do not determine behaviour in a direct fashion (1995: 52).

My 'tales from the field' originate from many different places and contexts, some of which are sites for observation and others are sites of solitary work and contemplation. This, in itself, is an important distinction, as my own behaviour invariably differed between time spent with the team, times of work and other ritual tasks, and times of leisure and socialising away from the team. More than this the core field observations were conducted in various surroundings, including training sessions, the locker-room, matches and nights out, and my interaction with some team members extended beyond this because of my duties as a lecturer at the university college. In each of these contexts I created a role for myself, which I felt was appropriate for the circumstance.

Forming Field Relations

BCUC has five male football teams. For reasons of anonymity, I do not disclose which of these teams became the focus of my research. The particular team in this case study competed in one of the Southern England Students Sport Association (SESSA) leagues, against four other teams, and played in an additional cup tournament. The players ranged from first to third year students, many of whom studied at the Wellesbourne campus. They were a predominantly white male group, with just one Black player. Although a handful of the players knew each other from the college or from other social circles, the principal association was football, as team-mates for this particular BCUC team. This boded well for my fieldwork, in that I am a male of similar age and background to the majority of the team, sharing with them an interest in football. As such, I could be integrated into the group with considerable ease, conducting my research as unobtrusively as possible in each of the research environments.

I do not wish to disclose too much about the identities of the players, but they have been given the pseudonyms of:

- **Alex**, a midfield player studying for a degree in Sport and Leisure Management
- **Alistair**, a midfield player studying for a degree in Sports Management and Football Studies

- **Andrew**, a Black student playing in midfield and studying for a degree in Sports Management and Football Studies
- **Brad**, a centre-forward studying for a degree in Sports Management and Human Performance
- **Daniel**, the team captain and centre-forward player, studying for a degree in Sports Coaching Management
- **Gary**, a defender and student of Sports Coaching Management
- **Gavin**, a midfield player who generally started on the substitutes bench, and was studying for a degree in Computer Technology
- **Michael**, the team goalkeeper, who was studying for a degree in Sports Coaching Management
- **Richard**, a defender and student of Sports Management and Football Studies
- **Robert**, the reserve goalkeeper and also an outfield player as either defender or midfielder, and a student of Travel and Tourism Management
- **Sean**, a defender and studying for a degree in Graphic Design and Advertising
- **Steve**, a Danish student and midfield player, studying for a degree in Sports Management and Football Studies
- **Tom**, a centre-forward and student of Graphic Design and Advertising

At each and every stage of the ethnographic process field relations are of vital importance, and approaches may vary considerably from context to context. Generalisations about field relations, therefore, are always subject to multiple exceptions, and no single set of rules can be devised that will produce good relationships (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995).

The associations I made in the field served numerous broad and specific research goals, and also worked to make my time there more rewarding and enjoyable. Initially at least, I attempted to establish relationships that would allow me access to the team. Some of these preliminary associations were somewhat transitory (although still very significant), and required very little from me in terms of instituting any kind of trust or rapport. Other relationships, however, required a far more longitudinal strategy, and trust, reciprocated honesty, rapport, and even

friendship, were of vital importance in achieving both broad requirements (such as being able to unobtrusively observe the players) and specific requirements (such as producing data of a more personal nature through semi-structured interviews).

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) note how field researchers, initially at least, are often treated with widespread suspicion, and this suspicion is only really quashed through steadily increasing contact. Thus, forming field relations can be seen as a gradual, developmental process, where early contact and questioning may form the foundation for subsequent group assimilation, familiarity, trust, and intimacy (Geer, 1964).

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 83) suggest that, 'whether or not people have knowledge of social research, and whatever attitude they take towards it, they will often be more concerned with what kind of person the researcher is than with the research itself'. The authors go on to note several factors that may influence relationships in the field, including such things as impression management, personal characteristics of the researcher, and the role taken by the researcher in the field (1995: 83-109). First and foremost, though, before any kind of association with subjects can be built, we must consider how to gain access to the field.

Access

My initial proposal was to conduct research into sport, masculinity and the media, but with the flexibility and freedom to explore, afforded to me by my supervisors, I came to realise that my association with BCUC opened a door, giving me something of a unique opportunity to explore the nuances of collegiate athletes at the institution.

Over the subsequent months, my research design developed, strongly influenced by earlier research carried out at BCUC (see Harris, 1998). Harris's postgraduate research focussed on the life-world of the university college's sole female football team, specifically the experiences and socialisation of the women players and perceived attitudes towards them. Like Harris, I describe my approach as

'opportunistic' (Reimer, 1977), in that I was presented with distinct possibilities by way of my locatedness in a higher education institution (see Harris, 1998).

The research design, despite the early influence of another ethnographic study of the same location, and other studies besides (e.g. Herzfeld, 1985; Hughson, 1998; Manson, 2004; Parker, 1996c), has undergone considerable fine tuning in the months and years since, and this case study differs markedly from Harris's work, in terms of both subject matter and approach. Most prominently, this thesis concerns itself with male collegiate football, and, necessarily in that Harris was a male in a female environment, our field roles differ considerably. What both these ethnographies share in common, however, is the relatively unproblematic access to the institution's sports teams, provided to us by way of our affiliation with BCUC.

Subsequent levels of access, however, were not as undemanding, and came with particular constraints that necessitated some amount of amendment to the research design. The second level of access essentially required some action to be taken on the above-mentioned 'opportunity'. More specifically, I needed to acquire authorisation to study the college's football players, from the president of the Athlete's Union (AU) at the university. Moreover, in that the notion of 'access' cannot be taken too literally and is concerned with more than simply 'entering' the field (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995), my meeting with the AU president was equally about acquiring valuable information and being 'pointed in the right direction'.

The AU president was, as many ethnographers have come to describe such figures, my first gatekeeper. Gatekeepers are the people who control access to human or material resources, to the group or community (Miller, 1999). More than this, though, gatekeepers enable, often help, the ethnographer to establish relationships with a range of subjects (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Sands, 2002). My hope was that the AU president would not only authorise my research, but also initiate subsequent relationships and give my fieldwork a 'kick start'.

Initial contact was very positive. Beginning with a phone-call to set-up a meeting, and the subsequent discussion of my ideas was treated with considerable enthusiasm. In the run-up to and throughout the meeting, my intention to conduct 'covert' research played on my mind. I had convinced myself that this would prove to be a 'sticking point' in my proposal, expecting the ethical considerations to deter the AU president. I was, therefore, very pleasantly surprised when he suggested that this be my approach, before I had made any mention of it. As it turned out, I abandoned the covert approach later in the research process, predominantly because of issues of informed consent.

After deciding upon an open observational approach, I made another appointment to see the AU president, to once again act as a gatekeeper for me. The presidency had changed hands shortly before this meeting, and I was now dealing with a considerably less enthusiastic gatekeeper. Although she granted me permission to continue with my research, I was afforded little help in making those first steps towards initiating contact with the new captain of the BCUC men's football team. All I was given was his name, after being told that the AU could not give out personal phone numbers.

A little investigating allowed me to find the Captain's mobile phone number, and I set up a meeting with him a few days later. Daniel (the Captain) became a very valuable gatekeeper and, later on, a key informant. The Captain's role in the team is to manage, motivate and organise the team, and Daniel, who was quite excited at the thought of my research, was extremely helpful during the early stages of my observations. He provided me with a great deal of background information on the team and, perhaps more importantly, took the time to personally introduce me to most of the players.

After this relatively straightforward set of procedures, I had achieved 'entry' to the field, but perhaps not 'access', in that the latter is a persistent consideration throughout the data collection process (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Realising a 'deeper' level of access, such as becoming an accepted member of the group and being able to accomplish a greater level of unobtrusiveness, and maintaining that level, required a more complex and extensive strategy. In his

research on football hooliganism, Giulianotti (1995) refers to the process of gaining this level of access as 'snowballing', seeking introductions to cultural members, who in turn introduce the ethnographer to others, who in turn introduce to others.

Daniel instigated this process by introducing me to some of the players during my first meeting with the team. The majority of these men, however, were seemingly disinterested in both my research, and myself, and my strategy became one of furthering my relationships with those team members who showed some initial interest. My goal here was to get to know these players on a more personal level, make them my key informants, and then use my relationship with them to get to know the remaining players over time. Such an approach, however, emphasised a whole new set of practical considerations, including such things as my personal characteristics, self-presentation, and my role in the field (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995).

Personal Characteristics

Mason (1996) suggests that we need to ascertain just how far our individual characteristics will influence our ability to take on the role that we envisage playing. There are several aspects of personal front that we are simply unable manage or change, and other aspects that may require considerable mental exertion in order to adapt to the elected role. Characteristics such as gender, race, and age may shape relationships with gatekeepers, informants and people under study in important ways (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995).

Indeed, there is no escaping the implications of sex and race, and while the aesthetics of age can often create some degree of unknowing, disguising your age is thwarted with problems. On the surface, I seemed to fit the research role quite well. I was, after all, a twenty-something, white male, entering into a young, male, predominantly white culture. As Easterday *et al* (1977) note, women researchers in this same setting may come up against the 'male fraternity', and find themselves excluded or the object of 'hustling' from the male hosts (see also Bruce, 2000). Moreover, the physical characteristics, cultural philosophy, and

personal style associated with 'race', may cause similar problems of exclusion or derision were I Black or Asian (see Keiser, 1970).

The issue of my age, throughout my fieldwork, was a little more problematic. Although I was only a little older, or in some cases a little younger, than the individuals on the football team, my position as a lecturer at the university college created a very different perception for a few of the players. Those whom I taught, or had taught at some stage of their degree (of which there were three on the team), regularly became quite withdrawn in my presence. I remember entering the locker-room one afternoon before a match, where Gary had just begun telling a lewd yarn. I knew this to be the case because I had heard words to the effect of 'there was a bishop and nun...' as I came through the door, and then a moment of numb silence and a discreet 'I'll tell ya later', as he saw me (Field Diary, 26th Feb 2003). The rest of the players were quick in expressing their disapproval at the premature end to the joke, and I felt it necessary to also encourage Gary to continue, assuring him, as blithely as possible, that I was not intolerant of a bit of bawdy humour. He finished the joke. We all laughed.

It may be that such concerns about perceptions of age, or more specifically maturity, are aspects of researcher self that can be 'managed' to some degree. It is also worth considering the nature of the subject that I had taught Gary, *Gender, Difference and Leisure*, in which I encouraged a greater amount of sensitivity towards issues of gender, race and sexuality. Perhaps I had given the impression to Gary, and a few others, that I was a 'hard-line' feminist or that I was to be held in repute at all times. If so, this was certainly not my intention. I expected, and indeed wanted, nothing more or less than equal treatment during my time with the football team.. I am not blind to the dilemma here that academic professionalism calls for some kind of student/lecturer periphery, but as a research student I have always felt that I waver somewhat awkwardly between the two.

Indeed, it is imperative that the ethnographer reflects upon the impression he/she may be making on the people under study, by the way in which he/she dresses, behaves and communicates. Self-presentation and general demeanour can be salient factors in gaining the confidence and respect of the people being

researched (Brewer, 2000; Fetterman, 1998; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Harris, 1998) and, unlike personal attributes, the ethnographer has a certain amount of control over such factors.

Impression Management

Harris (1998) talks at some length about the dilemma of self-presentation during the early stages of his research, and his first day as a lecturer at BCUC. He notes that while we are told 'never to judge a book by its cover', we invariably do, and thus the image that we portray during those early encounters may be of greater significance than we (the researchers) realise (1998: 95). I must confess to never giving the matter any great thought in either my role as a researcher or a lecturer. Indeed, my attire at my first lecture consisted of jeans, t-shirt and trainers, and I am also known to wear a cap quite regularly.

On many occasions in the past, I have (affectionately) been described as 'scruffy', although, perhaps narcissistically, I've always preferred the term 'rugged'. I don't care for ties or smart, well-polished shoes. I have several tattoos (although most are generally covered), I wear an earring, and, for me, shaving is a once-a-week activity. In retrospect, perhaps I do not 'fit' the image of a university lecturer, and had I given the matter any thought beforehand, I may have considered revising my appearance. That said, my relationship with the students I teach and have taught would suggest that I have managed to make a reasonably good impression, and I sincerely believe that (given the age and style of those under study), my informal guise aided rather than hindered my field relations.

Like Foster (1996: 71), I just wanted to appear as myself, which I consider to be a decent, honest and friendly type of person. These being, for want of a better phrase, 'natural attributes', it was not difficult to present myself as such during everyday encounters with the players, openly discussing aspects of my own life as much as I listened to others. In essence, I wanted to establish myself as an ordinary, approachable guy, just the same as the majority of the football players.

The acquisition of authentic data necessitates a great deal of trust between the researcher and the researched. Brewer (2000) notes that the bond of trust between

the ethnographer and the people s/he is working with must be premised on the same qualities people bring to all their social relationships: honesty, communication, friendliness, openness and confidence-building. Foster (1996) and Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) convey that during the early days of field negotiations it is advantageous to adopt more 'ordinary' topics of conversation, to establish one's identity as 'normal'. Moreover, it may also be beneficial to adopt an open physical posture, with bountiful handshakes and other cues for friendliness (Fetterman, 1998).

Early conversations with members of team tended to revolve around football; the teams we supported, the players we rated, and the players we did not. This seemed to be a good 'ice-breaker' as it was a subject all the players and myself were passionate about and could (and often did) talk about for hours. Furthermore, it was topic of conversation that we could 'get lost in', and that any perceived student/lecturer barrier was quickly, and unconsciously, removed for a time.

For the most part, my 'presentation' was not a conscious decision, but a natural response to a situation that involved meeting new people. At other times, however, some amount of 'acting' was required. I am what many psychologists may consider to be an 'introvert', not because I am naturally shy or lack confidence in any way, but because I simply prefer to listen and reflect rather than talk and be the centre of attention. In some instances, though, this approach would have been ineffective, particular in the early stages of research when some of the players still had reservations about my presence. As Brewer (2000) comments, ethnographers earn people's trust by showing a willingness to learn about them, and I therefore needed to present myself as a proactive investigator into their lives and initiate conversation myself. I did not, however, find this a particularly difficult transition to make.

Establishing a Role

In discussing field roles in participant observation, we still tend to look towards Gold's (1958) classic typology, in which he discloses four typical researcher roles: the complete participant, the participant-as-observer, the observer-as-

participant, and the complete observer. Upon reading an ethnographic account, it may seem that the decision to adopt one of these roles – or at least assume a position of either participant or observer – needs to be made early on in the research process. Yet, aside from the debate on whether it is in fact possible to observe without participating (see Burgess, 1982), research roles are constantly negotiated and renegotiated throughout a research project (Brewer, 2000; Burgess, 1984; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Sands, 2002; Schatzman and Strauss, 1973).

The observational and participatory opportunities presented to me varied from context to context, and the role I adopted varied accordingly. Furthermore, as discussed by Burgess (1984), field roles tend to develop in distinct phases, characterised by such things as the amount of time spent in the field and the nuances of an individual circumstance. The role I adopted in relation to the football players is complex, differing not only from one situation to another, but also from individual to individual and throughout the whole process.

In the early days of fieldwork, my conduct resembled that of any newcomer to the group. From there, however, I needed to be a great deal clearer as to the role(s) I was adopting, but maintain the level of flexibility with which I had entered the arena. The importance of a flexible approach to role organisation is articulated by Wax (1971: 10):

> Strict adherence to any method, technique or doctrinaire position may, for the fieldworker, become like confinement in a cage. If he is lucky or very cautious, a fieldworker may formulate a research problem so that he will find all the answers he needs within his cage. But if he finds himself in a field situation where he is limited by a particular method, theory, or technique he will do well to slip through the bars and try to find out what is really going on.

In many ways the role I adopted in each research context came about quite naturally, generated as a consequence of the situational restrictions and through a trial-and-error process (see Styles, 1979). In some research environments I found that a greater level of participation and rapport was warranted than in others, and frequently anything but full participation would have been very difficult indeed

(such as during training sessions). The role of the field researcher is a tricky one in the respect that he or she is endeavouring to make what is being studied familiar, but must also continue to treat it as if it were strange (Harris, 1998). The ethnographer is caught in the middle of the relentless, conflicting pull of 'surrender' and 'discipline' (Lofland and Lofland, 1984), and must always be aware of the dangers of both over-rapport and over-dissociation.

There is rarely an 'ideal role' for any researcher, and shifts in role can often be made over the course of fieldwork (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Perhaps the most fruitful approach to participant observation is to become what Freilich (1970) terms a 'marginal native', where an individual is said to operate in two worlds – that of participation and that of research. But marginality is not an easy position to maintain because, as Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 113) note, it engenders a continual sense of insecurity:

> In overt participant observation there is the strain of living with the ambiguity and uncertainty of one's social position on the margin, and doing so in a way that serves the research but is also ethically acceptable.

Because of this ambiguity, there is often a need for some distance to be maintained between the researcher and the researched. Schacht (1996), in his research on masculinity and rugby union, chose not to participate in some of the misogynistic rugby songs because of his pro-feminist beliefs. I can draw parallels here with my own position in the field, where I regularly found myself embroiled in situations that encroached upon both my moral and professional philosophies. Instances of anti-social behaviour, misogyny and, at times, sexual harassment were common during nights out with the players. This placed me in a difficult position because, on the one hand, I did not wish to share my virtuousness or pro-feminist beliefs with the team, but, on the other hand, I felt neither compelled to join in, nor even to let these behaviours continue. Rightly or wrongly in these instances, I remained silenced, but distanced myself as much as possible from the action.

The strains and stresses of the fieldworker's role are not always so ethically extreme, yet the phenomenon in general is very common. The dilemma of marginality can be very demanding, but it is also an important aspect of the fieldwork. Following the lead of Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 114), I strenuously avoided feeling 'at home' with the team, even in those instances where I may have been seen to participate fully. There were several occasions when I had to take a step back and reflect upon my relationship with the team. In training sessions I strived to work hard and improve my game. At matches I genuinely empathised with the players; when they won I felt a sense of victory myself, and when they lost, I felt the loss also. Was I perhaps becoming 'a team member' (a complete participant in the culture)? At times I probably did become a total native, but I also created a 'space' for myself, often away from the team, at home or in the office, but also in the company of the players. I was always fully aware of my role in field and, where I felt it to be necessary, I was able to step into my 'space', where I hope to have sustained a critical, analytic perspective.

Collecting Data in the Field

Recording data in the field is essential. As Brewer (2000: 87) notes, 'to recall events in detail in the evening or when in private is difficult and will result in general impressions rather than thick description'. But all data recording devices can be obtrusive and cause unease and mistrust. I chose to use a simple notepad for recording my observations, as this, I felt, was the most unobtrusive method and could be easily tucked away out of sight when necessary.

Following the advice of Burgess (1982), I recorded as much detail about each phenomenon as possible and, at first, simply noted down what I saw and heard, rather than my interpretation of the circumstance. My interpretations, or 'analytic field notes' (Brewer, 2000), were recorded later when I went about writing up my notes in a more legible form. I did this each Monday night after training and each Wednesday night or Thursday morning after the match and night out, for as Fetterman (1998: 114) reminds us, 'too long a delay [in writing up field notes] sacrifices the rich immediacy of concurrent notes'. Field notes were interpreted and recorded in a field diary, which also included my emotions and feelings, and a record of significant events and turning points in the whole research process.

The process of note taking was rarely straightforward, and constrictions and practical considerations varied across contexts. Due to the intensity of the training sessions, I was unable to take notes for the most part. I kept my notepad in my bag, along with a bottle of water, at the side of the training pitch, and was able to make brief notes coinciding with fluid-intake breaks. These opportunities were infrequent, however, and due to the limited time I had to take on water before getting back to the training, they were far from ideal. Thus, most of my note taking occurred after the session, on the way back to town on the mini-bus. The lack of light on the mini-bus made this a difficult task, but it also shadowed what I was doing from the players, who were usually locked in conversation for the duration.

Recording data at the Wednesday afternoon matches was far less problematic. Here, the players were focussed solely on winning, paying little attention to what I was doing on the sidelines, allowing me to work relatively unobtrusively. Perhaps the most difficult aspect of recording data in this context was the traditional British weather. I do not care to recall the amount of times my notes were smeared across the page by the relentless rainfall, or my hands were too cold and stiff to hold a pen, let alone form a legible sentence on the paper!

The locker room before and after the match, however, was an altogether more difficult environment to make notes in. The rooms were relatively small, and I found myself in very close quarters with the players, making unobtrusive note taking virtually impossible. The players, however, did not openly object to my presence or my writing activities in the locker room and seemed comfortable and relaxed around me. Moreover, given that the players were generally showering or changing, they were perhaps more comfortable knowing that I was busy writing, rather than scanning the room.

Within the contexts of the training sessions and the matches, I rarely felt at any time that I was intruding on the players' lives or impeding them in any way. This is difficult to explain, but because they were participating in a specific activity, working towards a particular goal and their focus was, therefore, elsewhere, I felt

that my presence was quite inconsequential. This was not the case, however, during the players' nights out. Here, I was working on their time, and I didn't want my attendance to spoil their enjoyment of the evening.

I was determined that I would not sit alongside them with a notepad and pen in my hand. Apart from encroaching on their leisure time, I would also look pretty conspicuous and absurd in such an environment. As an alternative, I would slip away to the privacy of the toilet cubicle to jot down any observations or conversation extracts. This seemed to work well at first, until a couple of the players pointed out that I must have a very weak bladder! Indeed, I was, at times, disappearing to the gents' toilet every few minutes. Aside from looking suspicious, or perhaps just like a man who could not handle his drink, I had to wonder what I might be missing out on during my absence.

A possible solution to this problem became apparent. In addition to the usual drinking, dancing, joking and other activities that took place on these nights out, the players were almost continuously tapping away on their mobile phones. The features on my phone include a personal organiser, which allowed me to make notes in the presence of the players, under the guise that I was simply writing a text message. Using this technique, as well as the occasional visit to the toilets and a few trips to the bar, provided me with plenty of opportunities to jot down observations.

At first I recorded almost everything that I observed or heard in all three of the foremost contexts. This is particularly important because, as Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) note, even things that one does not immediately understand might turn out to be significant later. As time went on and I gained experience in the field, and became familiar with the nuances of the surroundings and ethos, I was able to be more selective with my field notes, in accordance with the nascent themes.

Field notes were predominantly derived from the player's actions, reactions and discourse. Actions and reactions were described in as much detail as possible, making note of the people involved, the context, and even seemingly minor

nuances such as the clothing of an individual or the weather conditions. This detail, I anticipated, would spark a string of images from memory, affording substantial reconstruction of the observed scene (see Schatzman and Strauss, 1973).

In recording discourse, I strived to write down each and every word, as well as some of the contextual details. It was not always easy to 'keep up', particularly when recording conversations involving several people, but, not wishing to employ a tape-recorder outside of the interview context because of its potentially obtrusive qualities, I simply had to manage the best I could.

Talk Fragments

Perhaps the best definition of a talk fragment is an extract of the natural language of those people being studied (see Curry, 1991, 1998). In their simplest form, talk fragments may be short monologues: a statement, expletive or a joke. They may also be conversations between two or more individuals, characterised by interaction with others and a verbal interdependence. It is from this natural language that ethnographers may extract much of their observational data, within the structure of the talk itself (Brewer, 2000).

The analysis of natural language clearly requires a detailed record of what people say. Perhaps the most well-known talk analysis is Curry's (1991) *Fraternal Bonding in the Locker Room*, where the author takes a pro-feminist stance in determining meaning in athletes' conversations. In this instance, the pro-feminist perspective is probably best defined through it's consideration of systems of inequity as the root cause of sexist and paternalistic cultures, rather than assigning that responsibility to individual men (see Messner, 1990). Jimerson (2001), however, has criticised Curry's approach for needing a more convoluted analytic method, and suggests a conversation analysis, rather than a talk analysis, would have provided more details on the form of what was said.

Conversation analysis, according to Jimerson (2001: 319), 'locate[s] meanings by examining how conversationalists interact'. Thus, Jimerson's approach requires a

detailed record of what people say and do, and dissects both the verbal and non-verbal action, and verbal and non-verbal reaction (the interaction).

In this study, I aim to combine the pro-feminist stance with the interactionistic analytic approach, founded upon my own pro-feminist beliefs and a belief in the fundamental importance of capturing the interactional richness of conversations. In actuality, by merging the two perspectives I may adhere to neither. That is, the reaction of a conversationalist may be interpreted to oppose the notion that a system of inequity is at the source of masculinised culture (e.g. if a listener's reaction to crass talk revealed some dissent).

In essence, the pro-feminist approach to analysing natural language is built upon the assumption that the men within a particular cultural context are socialised into the gendered values of that context. Although I do not burden myself with the label of 'pro-feminist', I do maintain many pro-feminist beliefs, and share in the assumption that cultural masculinisation is a derivative of a system of inequity, rather than the responsibility of individual men (see Connell, 1990b; Messner, 1990b). Yet, I am not prepared to unambiguously accept this perspective, and feel that an interactionist approach provides a greater scope for interpretation.

In analysing talk fragments in the context of the BCUC team, I partially followed the lead of Jimerson (2001), in that I exhaustively (or as exhaustively as possible with just a notepad and pen, rather than a more accurate recording device) noted reactions as well as the verbal action itself (as I did in the semi-structured interviews also). In analysing and interpreting these fragments, I considered the interactive process as a whole, rather than simply what had been said. The following versions of the same talk fragment clearly demonstrate how verbal and non-verbal actions and reactions may alter the perception and, therefore, the interpretation of a circumstance. Here, BCUC Captain, Daniel, was talking with BCUC defender, Gary, who was sat with his girlfriend, Izzy, at the Union.

> **Daniel**: Is this your bird?
> **Gary**: Yeah. Izzy, this is Daniel.
> **Izzy**: Bird?
> **Gary**: Sorry, my girlfriend.

**Daniel**: Is this your bird?
**Gary**: Yeah. Izzy, this is Daniel.
**Izzy**: (*aghast*) Bird? (*turns away from them both. Daniel walks away laughing*).
**Gary**: (*biting his bottom lip*) Sorry, my girlfriend (*puts his hand on her shoulder apologetically*).

(Field Diary, 4th Dec 2002)

Although both the first and second extracts plainly demonstrate the underlying theme of the talk fragment (Daniel's use of a colloquial term to describe a woman, Izzy's questioning of the term, and the response of Gary), the second rendition may tell a very different story. For example, the second extract cogently reveals the derisive tone of Daniel through his laughter, the disgust of Izzy at being labelled a 'bird' through her tone and reaction, and the realisation and subsequent change in cultural perspective (once Daniel had departed) of Gary through his non-verbal actions. It is this rich description of the second extract that I strived to achieve in analysing talk fragments.

The Semi-Structured Interview

> Go forth now. Go forth and question. Ask and listen. The world is just beginning to open up to you. Each person you question can take you into a new part of the world. For the person who is willing to ask and listen the world will always be new.
>
> (Patton, 1990: 278)

The interview is a very straightforward research method, though interview techniques are very diverse. Arksey and Knight (1999) propound that we have all read, seen and heard interviews in the press, on the radio and on television. At first sight, the interview is little more than a conversation – an activity we have all regularly engaged in. Interviewing, according to Douglas (1985: 12), is 'overwhelmingly based on common-sense activities', and therefore, 'we might as well accept the inevitable and do it without thinking much about how we do it, just as everyone does common-sensically'.

There is, however, a danger in viewing these interactions as simple, common-sensical conversations, for the interview is a deliberate 'conversation with a

purpose' (Burgess, 1984; see also Arksey and Knight, 1999; Patton, 1990; Spradley, 1979). Moreover, as we understand research to be systematic enquiry (Arksey and Knight, 1999), the interview is previously thought-out and designed, and the reality of the interview situation created by the researcher (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994c). The interview, therefore, is not as straightforward as Douglas (1985) maintains, as full thought needs to be given to our (the researchers') goals, and to the personal characteristics of those we interview (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994c), as these may shape the potential meanings of our findings. We may even view the interviewing process as an art, 'the art of sociological sociability' (Fontana and Frey, 1994: 361).

Semi-structured interview is a technique that goes back to ethnography's origins (and beyond) at the University of Chicago in the 1920's. One of the most renowned interviewee accounts is Thomas and Znaniecki's (1920) study of the Polish peasant (see Burgess, 1984), which was an early classic of the Chicago School. Rather than seeking to fuse a wide spectrum of interviewee accounts and compose universality, Thomas and Znaniecki employed the experiences of just a few key individuals, attaining a rich, in-depth translation of the peasants' lives.

The semi-structured, ethnographic approach to interviewing embraces the individuality of human experience, aiming for a rich description of that experience. The focus of this investigative technique is on the topical (guided by the researcher) autobiographies of just a few key actors because they are interesting in their own right or because they are representative of a group (Brewer, 2000), or sometimes – where the former is applicable – the focus is on the autobiography of just a single informant (see for example Connell, 1990a). Fetterman (1998: 51) believes that key actors 'often provide ethnographers with rich, detailed autobiographical descriptions', which is invaluable in achieving understanding of human behaviour, and contributions to the informant's social identity.

It was a somewhat peculiar and demoralizing experience asking the football players if they would like to be interviewed to further my research. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) note that field researchers are frequently treated with

suspicion by those they research, but this was a difficulty I had, happily, not experienced until I came to request one-on-one meetings with the players.

"How many of you would be happy to be interviewed sometime, just out of interest?", I asked as a Monday night training session drew to a close. For a moment I was completely ignored as the players removed their shin-pads and swigged ferociously from their water bottles and tried to regain their lost breathe. After what seemed like several minutes of inquisitive scanning and anticipating some kind of reply to my question, I finally heard a "yeah, no problem" and a "yeah, sure... anytime" from a couple of the players. While I was grateful for the positive response of two of the players, I had, in all honesty, hoped for (and expected!) a little more enthusiasm from the group of nine or so players I had approached. I waited a little while longer, but no further response came. Perhaps they had not all heard me, I thought, and I repeated the question, this time directing it towards individuals. "Brad?", I enquired. "Er... yeah, ok", came the reply. Now I felt awkward; Brad had clearly been put on the spot. In an attempt to right the wrong I felt I had just committed, I quickly moved on to another player that I knew fairly well: "Richard? Any chance of an interview?" , I asked. "Er... yeah, I guess... er... well, what do you want to know?", Richard answered, in a noticeably vexed tone. I was compelled to stop and think for an instant – I had not expected such an apprehensive and distrustful reaction to my request. With quick reflection, I felt no reason to hide neither my motives nor my anticipated line of questioning during the interviews, so I replied honestly: "I will probably ask you a bit about your family and your background, and about your views on certain issues, and about football in general. Some of the questions might be a bit personal or embarrassing, but you will be free to answer what you want and tell me to piss-off if your don't like the question". Perhaps I over-embellished a little, but my words seemed to have a positive affect, if only because I had cursed and given some cause for the players to laugh and relax a little. "Yeah, ok", replied Richard, with a chuckle, and several more players replied positively or at least nodded in agreement. This was a breakthrough – albeit a breakthrough I had never anticipated I would be required to make – but it was also only the beginning of my problems in acquiring an hour or so of the players' spare-time.

Two days later, I assembled with the players in the bar, just prior to a vital cup game (subsequently to become their final game of the season). As we sat discussing the imminent match and various other morsels of fashionable hearsay, I once again broached the subject of interviews, partly as a reminder to those who had consented on the Monday, but also as a gauge as to the enthusiasm of those players and the players I had not yet approached. While the response was not especially fervent, I was pleased that the players had not forgotten (or chosen to forget) my request for interviews and remained willing. Realising that my interjection with work-related issues had somewhat soured the previously upbeat atmosphere, I quickly returned the conversation to the altogether less dreary banter we had all been enjoying, pausing only to ask the players to come and see me over the next couple of days to confirm a time and place (an interview schedule along with some characteristics of the interviewees can be viewed in Appendix 2)

On reflection, my approach had been imprudent to say the least. Essentially, as I see it, I had made two mistakes. Firstly, I had requested interviews with the players at times when they were, perhaps, focussing on other things and, therefore, they responded intuitively rather than sincerely. Secondly, I had placed the responsibility of subsequent action with the players, rather than myself. As the days went by, only one of the players came to see me and, what's more, the end of the academic year was rapidly approaching and students were beginning to avoid the university college in preparation for their summer break. Several phone-calls (and numerous failures to answer) later, I managed to track down a further three football players and, given that they were now doggedly avoiding setting foot on the university-college grounds, I opted to allow them to choose the place of interview. I was forced to resign myself to the fact that any further interviews would now have to wait until the commencement of the following semester in September 2003 (a waiting period of some three months). And, as it turned out, one of the interviews I had managed to carry out was mostly inaudible, partly due to background noise and also because of a problem with the tape.

The interviews took place at various locations, as I allowed the interviewees some input here. I wanted them to feel as comfortable as possible and not to have to go out of their way to do me this favour. I did unreservedly feel that the players agreeing to an interview was a personal favour to me. It had been made all too clear that the majority of them would prefer not to be questioned one-on-one, which I can only suggest was an indication that they were suspicious about my intentions. This is why I had targeted a select few that I knew best, in the hope that they would help me out and see the process as a 'coming together' of friends or peers, rather than an invasion of privacy or a barrage of probing questions. After all, this is the interactionist perspective espoused by the humanistic approach to interviews (see Denzin, 1970). Furthermore, I hoped that the co-operation of these few would inspire other players to discount their suspicions and volunteer – perhaps even come to like the idea of being interviewed.

In that my interviews took a semi-structured form, each was different. The extent to which I was familiar with the players impacted greatly on the progression and the outcome of the interview, as did the type of person the interviewee was. Brad, for example, had always been quite reticent and, perhaps consequently, I did not know him as well as some of the other interviewees and information was often quite hard to come by. Steve, on the other hand, was regularly vociferous and I knew him very well as a student that I had taught and helped with his work, and I had spoken to him on numerous occasions in a more social environment. As such, Steve had a great deal to say during the interview and the challenge came in trying to control the direction of his conversation!

For the most part I was happy for the interviewee to feel free to simply talk. My initial letter to the men who had agreed to be interviewed, as well as asking for a signature of consent, requested that the proceedings be looked at as an 'informal chat' and that they be interviewee led (see Appendix 2) I also suggested that the players might ask me questions if they wished. Throughout the entire research process I had attempted to remove the hierarchical structure between researcher and researched (Maynard, 1994), but never more so than during these interviews. I tried to ensure the interviews were unrestricted, uncensored and reciprocal, but, for my part, routinely considering the purpose behind the conversation.

Essentially, I wanted to know who these players were, what made them 'tick' and how they acquired this identity. Like Burgess (1984) I deemed the already established relationship between researcher and researched to be fundamental in acquiring this information and placed a great deal of emphasis upon this familiarity, accentuating the informality of the proceedings. For each interview I drew-up an 'agenda', consisting of some broad themes and topics of conversation, and some devised questions that may be used to initiate discussion on each topic (see Corbin, 1971). In many cases, as I had hoped, these prompts were not necessary, as the discussions evolved and led from one topic to another in 'natural' progression. Therefore, the order in which topics were discussed varied from interview to interview, and I occasionally needed to go back and discuss themes that had not instinctively come-up in the proceedings.

No matter what the venue for the interview, I always made sure that I was able to offer the player a bottle of water to drink. At this point I asked them to read the information I had provided on the consent form and sign (see Appendix 2). Some of the players wanted further information about what the interviews were going to be about and why I needed them. I was happy to disclose this information and made it a point to discuss my agenda with each interviewee and attempt to put them at ease. Following the advice of Berg (1995) and Douglas (1985), I then engaged in informal 'chat' to establish rapport and settle the players. We would generally talk about football and the fortunes of our respective teams and, at some point during this exchange, I would turn on the tape. I did the best I could to reduce the obtrusiveness of the tape-recorder, by placing it out of direct view.

Data Analysis, Reflexivity, and the Writing of the Ethnography

Much of the recent attention of qualitative researchers has focussed on improving and making explicit their techniques for data collection, meanwhile analytic considerations have been at best quite secondary (Strauss, 1987). This differs markedly from advocates of positivism, who have developed, and written about, analysis techniques as rigorously as they have collection methods. However, in the defence of many qualitative researchers, it is important to note the difficulties

in defining the process of analysis as, in ethnography, it is not a distinct stage of the research (see Harris, 1998; Manson, 2004; Parker, 1996c).

Data analysis, to one degree or another, occurs for the duration of the research process, beginning in the pre-fieldwork phase and continuing through to the act of 'writing-up'. The interpretive approach, by its very nature, does not allow for the production of theories or conceptual categories prior to the collection of data. Rather, these concepts and typologies are grounded in the data. This process is central to the notion of 'Grounded Theory', promoted by Glaser and Strauss (1967), in which theory is developed out of data analysis, and subsequent data collection is guided strategically by the emergent theory (Strauss, 1987; Strauss and Corbin, 1994).

I do not, however, wish to label this research as Grounded Theory, not least because this work is directed not towards the generation of theory, but to a description and explanation of behaviours. Although some have suggested that the same interactive process is involved for each of these analytical methods – in that both 'grounded theorising' and 'rich description' unravel the many layers of interpretation and meaning involved in some piece of social behaviour (e.g. Seale, 1999) – Grounded Theory is distinguished by its ambition to render the description into middle-range (generalised) theoretical statements, paralleled with quantitative rather than qualitative methodologies.

The seemingly instinctive need for researchers to label their work as Grounded Theory is, perhaps, aligned to a perceived requirement to keep their work 'scientific' (Harris, 1998: 87), and give it some credibility. There are, however, very few studies that unerringly follow Glaser and Strauss's (1967) guidelines, which involve an apparently interminable procedure of coding and re-coding. As Hammersley (1984) notes, in ethnography, given the sheer amount of time spent collecting and recording data, the Grounded Theory model is almost impossible to adhere to.

Most ethnographic data takes the form of descriptive and analytical field notes, transcripts, conversation fragments and the thoughts and reflections in the

researcher's own head, provided by the experience of fieldwork. Disentangling this chaotic throng of information is no easy task, and it is, perhaps, even harder to lucidly describe the process(es) involved. According to Sands (2002), and along a similar methodological line to Grounded Theory, one prominent method of making sense of ethnographic data is to search for themes and regularities. This would certainly appear to be the most simplistic and coherent method of analysis, but Sands' proposal lacks precision in divulging exactly what this process may involve.

This is rectified to some degree by Huberman and Miles (1998), who define ethnographic data analysis as involving three sub-processes: data reduction (selecting units of data from the total universe of data); data display (assembling the information in some format); and conclusion drawing (interpretation of findings). The researcher is central in each of these analytic components. Ethnographers have to select from an infinite series of events on the basis of their personal interests, and the socio-biographical characteristics of the ethnographer compared to the people in the field can affect what is seen and recorded and how its is interpreted (Brewer, 2000).

Following Huberman and Miles (1998), the analysis of data for this study began with data collection and followed a creative yet distinct process. My time as a participant observer produced substantial field notes and interview transcripts, which then needed to be sorted and analysed before any record could be produced. As has already been conveyed, I made field notes as detailed as possible, and then expanded upon and developed these notes, at the earliest possible convenience, in a field diary. The process of analysis began here in that I did not always record everything in my diary. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) suggest, social scenes are often truly inexhaustible and some selection has to be made. As I gradually became more proficient in the art of interpretation, my scope of recorded observations lessened, emphasising particular aspects of the social scene. Notes that I did not select to record in my field diary were still copied into a 'retrievable' form and stored in chronological order in notebooks, lest they may be reinterpreted as significant at a later stage.

My field diary itself was also kept chronologically and contextually (e.g. training ground, bar), as a running record of events. The problem that arose here is that it became necessary to reorganise field notes thematically, rather than chronologically (Brewer, 2000; Burgess, 1984; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; see also Allin, 2003; Harris, 1998; Manson, 2004; Parker, 1996c). As the research progressed I created files according to regularities in the data, added my own comments and reflections and coded under particular headings (e.g. macho ritual, oppressive discourse, playing standards, power/authority). Interview transcripts were read and re-read and regularities that emerged influenced the course of subsequent interviews. Themes from interview data were coded and filed, with my own comments and reflections. Where regularities crossed over into more than one emerging theme, data were copied and coded accordingly. All themes and generalisations were linked back to the body of knowledge established in Chapter Two in order to form constructs and theories that were subsequently taken back into the field to help focus the next wave of data collection.

The broad process of analysis that I followed, then, may be broken down into separate stages. First, the descriptive coding of the data, allowing me to reduce the amount of information and focus on selected issues. Second, the interpretive coding of the data and, third, the 'clustering' of data, sorting the interpreted phenomena into categories and generating theories from the emergent themes (see Miles and Huberman, 1994). Through this approach, my work became progressively focussed, with concomitant action allowing the research design to emerge and develop over time (see Maykut and Morehouse, 1994).

At the centre of my analysis was the 'human as instrument' approach to interpreting the meaning of data. Indeed, the units of data selected for analysis, the way in which the data was assembled, and the conclusions drawn from the data, were all subject to my own personal feelings, attitudes and characteristics, originating, in part, from my socio-cultural locatedness as a researcher. The 'tales' from the collegiate football players' world that I produce in this work are highly personalised, subjective accounts. Moreover, the discussions I offer upon the meanings of phenomena, and the concepts I develop, are founded upon a tailored interpretation, utilising existing theory, common sense knowledge, and a

particularised familiarity and understanding. In true interpretivist fashion, the empirical data I present in the coming chapters is not an objective 'truth', but a subjective experience (Sparkes, 1992), and the process of analysis and interpretation has been accomplished 'mind-dependently' in the hermeneutic tradition (see Patton, 1990). It is for this reason that it is fundamentally important to be reflexive throughout the research process: in design, fieldwork, analysis, and 'writing-up'. Reflexivity, according to Brewer (2000), involves reflection by ethnographers on the social processes that impinge upon and influence data. It requires a critical attitude towards data, and recognition of the individual and collective influences on the research. Moreover, as Humberstone (1997: 200) notes, 'the visibility of the researcher's personal experience and a self-interrogation of their own values and motivations embedded in the particular research process are pivotal'.

The fact that behaviour and attitudes are often variable across contexts, and that the researcher may influence the context, becomes central to the analysis. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) note, the researcher becomes the research instrument par excellence, discarding the idea that the social character of research can be standardised out or avoided. In doing this, we (the researcher) can minimise reactivity, or at least monitor it. Interpretive research habitually raises questions of validity from its critics, particularly regarding the construction of findings and data that is inescapable in the method. However, to suggest that the ethnographer's findings are constructed does not automatically imply that they do not or cannot represent social phenomena (Gregory, 1970). Similarly, 'the fact that as researchers we are likely to have an effect on the people we study does not mean that the validity of our findings is restricted to the data elicitation situations on which we relied' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995: 18).

In short, attempts to eliminate the effects of the researcher would be futile. Rather, the ethnographer may find his/her time better spent trying to understand reactivity and monitoring it (Schuman, 1982), or perhaps even exploiting it – how people respond to the presence of the researcher may be as informative as how they react to other situations (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Above all else, an ongoing reflexive account of the entire research process is as important as any

other aspect of the completed ethnography. This can be particularly difficult in the 'writing-up' of the study, where attempting to 'be there' in the text is often a more arduous task than 'being there' in the field (see for example Geertz, 1988).

In writing an ethnography, it is imperative that the researcher 'constructs versions of social reality, and persuades his or her reader of the authenticity, plausibility and significance of representations of social scenes or settings' (Atkinson, 1990: 57). The writing of an ethnographic text, according to Atkinson, is a two-part act. Firstly, the researcher 'writes down' what has happened in the field, uninterrupted by self-conscious intervention or reflection. Secondly, the researcher 'writes-up' the data, which carries stronger connotations of a constructive side to the writing, and is reflexive to the core (1990: 61).

The alleged crisis of representation and legitimation that characterises the 'fifth moment of qualitative inquiry' (see Denzin and Lincoln, 1994a) has provided the foundation for widespread scrutiny of traditional genres of writing (see for example Atkinson, 1990; Sparkes, 1997; Van Maanen, 1988). The 'writing-up' of ethnographies in the current research environment, amongst calls from the positivistic bloc for greater validity in interpretive works, necessitates an alternative to validation, which maintains the core qualitative pedigree of ethnographic study. Qualitative researchers, now have to make disciplined, principled choices and strategic decisions about how to represent and reconstruct social worlds, actors, scenes, and action (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996).

In the case of validity and reliability, as Sparkes (2000) has demonstrated, orthodox interpretations of these terms, based upon positivistic epistemologies, have little applicability or value when considering alternative forms of writing. As Riessman (1993: 64) notes, the prevailing procedures for establishing validity:

> Rely on realist assumptions and consequently are largely irrelevant to narrative studies. A personal narrative is not meant to be read as an exact record of what happened nor is it a mirror of the world 'out there'.

For Riessman, and many other post-modern and experimental writers, traditional notions of reliability simply do not apply, and validity must be radically reconceptualised. Hammersley (1992: 69) uses 'validity' as a synonym for 'truth', and remarks:

> An account is valid or true if it represents accurately those features of the phenomena that it is intended to describe, explain or theorise. Assumed here, then, is a correspondence theory of truth, but the correspondence involves selective representation rather than reproduction of reality.

The orthodox determinant of validity in ethnographic works, according to Brewer (2000), is the extent to which the data accurately reflect the phenomena under study. With many of the emergent, new forms of writing, such as fictional representations, poetic representations, and autobiography, which do not necessarily seek accuracy, if accuracy is defined in terms of complying to a reality, by what criteria can these texts be evaluated? Perhaps the answer lies in the abandonment of the notion of validity, and instead seeking credibility, which, for me, implies a greater consideration of the desired effect of the text.

Banks and Banks (1998: 17) suggest, 'Pablo Picasso said that we all know art is not truth. Art is a lie that makes us realize truth'. We can draw parallels between Picasso's alleged views on art and many forms of alternative ethnographic writing, which do not necessarily assert 'truth', but often strive to be 'truthful'. It is in the imaginative, evocative construction of such texts that a 'reality' is conjured in the mind of the reader. Thus it seems rational to evaluate alternative ethnographies not on their factuality, but on their evocative potentiality (Pelias, 1999).

The credibility of ethnographic 'tales', therefore, lies in the plausibility of their interpretations (Wolcott, 1994: 366), and their aesthetic standards, their emotive force, their capacity to engage the readers emotionally, their 'verisimilitude', and their authenticity or integrity (Sparkes, 2002: 204). The term verisimilitude is used in many different ways (Atkinson, 1990; Schwandt, 1997), referring to an appearance of truth or reality in a text, the evocative power of a text, and the extent to which a text conforms to the conventions of its genre (Schwandt, 1997).

When used as an alternative to validation, all these meanings are considered, and with verisimilitude rather than validity to the fore, the personal, literary, and even the poetic can be a 'valid' source of knowledge (Sparkes, 2002). The premise behind this being that such accounts can potentially evoke memories of a similar experience or construct a believable world that the reader can put themselves in, thus providing a legitimate or 'real' situation. It is upon these criteria, borrowed from the arts and from aesthetics, that it is suggested alternative ethnographies may be evaluated (Atkinson, 1990; Eisner, 1991; Rinehart, 1998; Sparkes, 2002).

Ethical Considerations

It is not my intention here to provide a verbose breakdown of the ethics of ethnography, but rather to articulate the ethical considerations of this particular case study, as I saw them, in a brief, concise and personalised account. That is to say, I concentrate here on issues arising from my approach to the research and my behaviour as a researcher, and the consequences for the people studied. I do this with a consideration of some the issues suggested by Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), including issues of informed consent, privacy, and consequences for future research. I also consider the paramount ethical issue of honesty in ethnographic research.

Covert research, as this case study began as a pilot observation in 2001, is perhaps the most conspicuous deviation from the ethical practice of informed consent. Only a select few participants were aware of my capacity as a researcher, including the AU president and the team captain of the time. In many ways, research conducted under these conditions can be likened to spying. It was partially for this reason, as well as for more practical reasons of access that I decided to abandon the covert approach for the case study proper.

My participant observation during the 2002/2003 season, then, was more open and almost all of those under study were informed of, and consented to my role as a researcher. The only person to remain unaware was the team coach, Jay. This was not a deliberate attempt on my part to keep him in the dark. Rather, Jay was not a principal player in my observations in the same way that the team members

were, so I felt neither the need to advise of nor conceal my researcher identity. Indeed, Jay did become aware that I was an observer reasonably early on in the research process and, later, I did speak to him and use him as an informant.

Seeking informed consent, I also provided further information for those players that I interviewed, and asked for them to sign a consent form. But this is not to suggest that my research was completely open. For the most part, I concealed my note-taking from the players and, therefore, the men were not always aware that I was recorded what they had said or done. This was in trying to find a balance between openness and creating discomfort by being too overt, the latter of which is likely to impact on the participants as well as the research findings. Further, I did not tell any of the men under study *everything* about my research. For the most part, this was because I did not know myself the direction the case study would take and, moreover, I felt that too much information may alter behavioural patterns. In an attempt to counter this concealment, I made it clear to all of the men that my written work was available for any of them to read if they so wished. Indeed, I had always intended that Daniel (the captain) would eventually read it anyway, to authenticate my findings. As it turned out, none of the men wished to read the work – as undergraduates they had enough to read already!

A final point when considering informed consent is that I was not entirely open about my personal views on the behaviours I witnessed. My pro-feminist beliefs prevented me from sharing the men's enthusiasm for certain activities, but I rarely challenged their behaviour or put my views forward through fear of unduly influencing the research findings. This perhaps gave the impression that I was 'one of them' and shared their outlook on particular issues, which may, in turn, have given them a false reasoning to trust in and consent to my describing and analysing of these behaviours.

Perhaps the most apparent component of privacy is the need to disguise the identity of those under observation. All of the participants in this case study were provided a pseudonym, and any names that came up in the men's conversations were also changed. Moreover, given that by character and action alone some of

the men may be recognised by readers of this thesis, I also attempted to conceal the exact context of this research by omitting any reference to which of the five BCUC teams I was investigating. Considering the importance of milieu in the research process, however, I felt it unfeasible to omit references to the institution itself.

Issues of privacy, though, go beyond merely disguising identities. As a neophyte researcher I made some ethical errors early on in this case study. Particularly, being fully aware of issues of privacy, I promised informants and interviewees complete confidentiality. With hindsight, this was erroneous because I was, of course, intending to share with others the things that they had told me. What, in fact, I had intended to promise was anonymity, rather than confidentiality. The potential here was (and still is) for the men to feel that their confidence has been betrayed. At the heart of this ethical error was my own inexperience resulting in some confusion on my part as to the implications of the two terms.

Another privacy issue arises not from concerns over participant identity, but from distinguishing between the public and private spheres of each man's life. That is to say, many of the issues I wished to address in the interviews involved a high level of prying into the men's private lives. This, I felt, was unavoidable, because information about relationships with parents and girlfriends, for instance, was crucial to this research. Here, at least I was aware that this information was private, rather than public, which is a distinction that, in the past, many ethnographers have purportedly not made (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). But the credibility of such data outweighed the implications of asking the men about these scenarios. To counter the ethical considerations, however, I ensured that my questioning was as sensitive as possible, and each interviewee was informed of his right to refusal and to terminate the interview at any time. Further, interviewees were advised of their ownership of the interview transcript, for reading and omission if they so wished.

As an ethnographer, it is always important to consider the impact that you have on the research setting, as this may have consequences for access for ethnographers in the future. If I were to create 'damage', by way of offending or exploiting

those people being researched, then subsequent research is likely to be found objectionable. Throughout, relations with informants were important to me and I made every effort to accommodate their beliefs and feelings in the research process. While I did not see it as appropriate to be 'friends' with my informants (partially because I was also a lecturer at the institution where they studied, but also because this may create potential for obscurity in research findings), I did strive to be 'friendly'. Moreover, upon leaving the research context, at the end my field work, I took the time to say thank you and goodbye to all of my informants, and I remain friendly and sociable – stopping for a quick chat and the like – when I see them around the university college campuses.

In doing this, I hope that I have made the research experience 'pain-free', and perhaps even enjoyable, for those people under study. And that this leaves them open to other researchers in the future. But, a more problematic issue with regard to the reception of future research is concerned with the research findings and analysis, and my final thesis. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) convey, the researcher and the researched will not necessarily see the research in the same way – there may well be contradictory interpretations and clashes of interest. This creates a clear conflict of ethics, because while I do not wish to upset or offend my informants, I am not willing to compromise my research findings. Indeed, honesty in research may be the most fundamental of all ethical considerations.

There is a significant difference between honesty and truth in social research. I do not claim that this thesis uncovers the truth about the collegiate football setting, or at least not an objective truth. Rather, this case study is concerned with just my interpretation – one subjective 'reality' – of the way in which male collegiate football players construct masculinities. But, within this, I do claim to have provided an authentic, honest and credible analysis of the environment, and of the successes and failings of my chosen methodology and conceptual frame. I have utilised the men's own words where I could, and where this was not feasible, I have made it clear that the evidence has been subjected to my interpretation and biases. As a means of establishing my honesty and also measuring the authenticity of the case study, the team captain, Daniel, was asked to read the thesis and provide me with his views. However, although Daniel did read and

approve his interview transcript, he was reluctant to read the thesis or the observational data because of the impact upon his time. Turning to some of the other players (those that I still had contact details for), I found the same response from them also. With some further consideration, I did not necessarily feel this to be an entirely negative situation because the content of the thesis (particularly chapter 8) is quite blunt in its description of behaviours. Such data, while an honest reflection of the situation, has the potential to cause 'harm' to the individual men (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995), by way of not always discussing them, and their behaviour, in a positive light.

# Chapter 6:

# The Making of the Footballing Man: Sport, Gender and Identity

Individuals draw a sense of 'self' from a broad range of sources (Bradley, 1996), and thus the identities that they come to assume are regularly complex and disjointed. The road that one follows to acquire one's subjectivities is necessarily furrowed with an eclectic influence of subjective informants, such as gender, class, race and sexuality. Identities, therefore, are multifaceted, momentary and exchangeable.

This chapter is primarily concerned with eight of the BCUC men's 'football identities' – that is, the 'self' that is most salient within the context of football – and principally addresses gender as the source of this identification. I explore this from a social constructionist standpoint and I look towards three of the most prominent social agents in the structuring of adult identities – the family, schools, and the media.

The prime source of information here was the life-history interviews conducted between the months of May and November 2003. Eight men were interviewed in total; all were aged between nineteen and twenty-four. Seven of the eight men were white and one was black; one of the men was Danish, the rest were English. All of the men considered themselves to have a middle-class background; all of the men were atheist; and all of the men claimed to be heterosexual.

## Social Constructionism and Gender Identity

Particularly since the publication of Butler's (1990) influential book, *Gender Trouble*, feminist and pro-feminist academics have come to view gender as an actively constructed social identification. The gender dichotomy manifest in most contemporary cultures is presented as a naturally occurring phenomenon, and

inequalities that arise from it are negotiated in terms of being necessary for the efficient operation of the social system. In this sense, men and women function as socialised beings, albeit at a subliminal level, to maintain some form of social stability. Whitehead (2002) expresses this phenomenon as the 'collective conscience' of a common belief system, in which men and women are socially obligated to 'perform' certain roles.

Messner (2002) notes that we regularly see children performing gender in ways that constitute them as two separate groups (boys vs. girls), and we see parents performing gender in ways that give the stamp of adult approval to the children's performances of difference. From birth, children begin to develop their human potential under the guidance of numerous social structures and agents, which have themselves developed under an umbrella of biological determinism, and effectively teach children how to be a man or a woman in process often referred to as 'socialisation'.

Processes of socialisation became of great interest to sociologists as a key component within the functionalist concept of sex-roles. But where the broader characterisation of the sex-role framework is all but subjugated from sociology, the notion that gender is not fixed in advance of social interaction remains an important theme in the modern sociology of gender. Like the sex-role paradigm, this new theoretical language is concerned with the public learning of a conventional masculinity and femininity, but rather than treat these as pre-existing norms, which are passively internalised and enacted, it explores the making and remaking of these conventions in social practice itself (see also Connell, 1995). Thus, gender norms are not rigid. Rather, they are in a constant state of change owing to the historical mobility of convention and the importance of the institutional setting. This gives rise to a dualism of interest in gender identity in the social sciences. Firstly, an interest in the politics of masculine norms (their construction and mobilisation) and, secondly, in the forces that counter-balance or limit the production of a particular kind of masculinity.

Male Identity

The processes involved in identity construction often follow a path of gender stereotypes rooted, seemingly unproblematically, in dualisms such as passive/assertive, strong/weak, irrational/rational, gentle/forceful, emotional/distant (see Archer and Lloyd, 1985; Edley and Wetherall, 1995). These characteristics are regularly categorised under the broad headings of masculinity and femininity, as if these were opposite poles on an undimensional continuum (Weitz, 1977). More recently, informed in the main by 'second wave feminism', leading pro-feminist scholars have argued for a new trajectory in the critical study of men (see especially Brod and Kaufman, 1994; Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 1985; Connell, 1987; Hearn, 1987; Kaufman, 1987b; Kimmel, 1987a). These authors have highlighted that masculinity and femininity are not so easily defined and place emphasis upon the differences within the lived experiences of individuals in gender role perspectives.

While increasingly accepted in gender research, the notion of men and women as unitary identities is problematised in respect of the individual's ability to assimilate, act or represent dominant social and cultural gender codes and symbols (Whitehead, 2002). The socio-historical structure of masculinity connects notions of manliness to a deep-seated mythology of male power, which is at the heart of the dichotomisation that Connell (1987a) terms the 'gender order'. What it is to be a man has seemingly already been decided and the moulds for male identity intuitively prepared for the birth of a boy. The principals of hegemonic masculinity, underpinned by and obligingly underpinning male hegemony, provide the gendered canopy under which the archetype for male self is (re)constructed. It is here that male identity is organised with respect to ideological assumptions about manhood, and is regularly characterised as 'not-feminine' or 'not-effeminate' (see Craib, 1987: 721).

But there is diversity in masculinities, and recognising this is key to understanding male identity. However, it is also important to recognise the relations between different kinds of masculinity: relations of alliance, dominance and subordination (Connell, 1995). Studies of sport vividly show patterns of hegemony (e.g. McKay *et al*, 2000; Messner, 1992; Messner and Sabo, 1990). The masculinity exalted

through competitive sport is hegemonic and sporting prowess is a test of manhood, especially for young boys. But hegemony is not automatic, and may be disrupted, or perhaps may disrupt itself (Connell, 1995). Sporting prowess can go too far when, for instance, 'legal' violence on the sports field becomes too severe and risks discrediting sport as a whole (see for example Messner, 1992). Also, hegemonic patterns can be rejected as boys fight or negotiate their way out of competitive sport and establish a claim to respect elsewhere, in academia or art (see for example Walker, 1988).

So, as Connell (1995) observes, the relationships constructing masculinity are dialectical: they do not correspond to the one-way causation of a socialisation model. Gender identity is socially constructed in a process of interaction involving individual, group and social institution. But people and groups of people are not passive recipients of conventional messages and identity is constructed through insurgence as well as conformity. In some school environments, for example, the exemplars of hegemonic masculinity may be the 'hard' boys, the fighters and the bullies, but this is not the masculinity intentionally prescribed by the school. It is, rather, an oppositional form of masculinity where the school authorities, and the messages of integrity and morality they communicate, serve as the foil.

Sport and Male Identity

For a lot of us it is difficult to appreciate the depth of identification that many men develop with their roles as athletes. As men are pressured into adopting particular characteristics, sport is suggested to be the breeding ground and defender of these hegemonic values and attitudes. Raphael (1988) has argued that modern societies lack the masculine initiation rituals that so often characterise tribal societies and today's men are confused about what it means to be a man, and they find in sport a salient substitute for these rituals. Such a view is certainly interesting, perhaps even compelling, particularly when placed alongside Morris's (1981) portrait of contemporary football players as tribal warriors. However, the failings of such views are in their assumption that both sport and masculinity are an expression of some biological human need. I maintain that sport is a social institution and

masculinity is also socially constructed rather than, as Messner (1992: 8) puts it, 'some buried biological "essence of manhood"'.

Messner (1992) suggests that young boys appear to bring to their first sporting experiences ambivalent needs for connection with others. In most cases, sport certainly seems to afford such a connection, providing a foundation for otherwise socially hazardous intimate relationships with other boys. That is to say, the hierarchical structure of sport allows these connections to be made in a relatively 'safe' milieu of homophobia and misogyny. In this respect, a boy's commitment to a sporting identity, albeit often influenced by a family member, may amount to what Connell (1990b: 459) has called 'the moment of engagement with hegemonic masculinity – the moment at which the boy takes up the project of hegemonic masculinity as his own'.

Frequently from birth, boys are progressively encouraged to participate in appropriate sporting activities, inducted in the ways of the sportsman, or sometimes thrown unwittingly into the sport arena as a life-education in itself. The processes through which boys are sold on the pleasures and benefits of sport are often referred to as 'sport socialisation', but, as Lenskyj (1994: 7) articulates, and I have suggested previously, sport acts as a significant 'socialiser' itself, not just in terms of establishing dominant masculinities:

> Family members, peers, teachers, coaches, the mass media and the advertising industry all play an important part in sport socialization. After individuals begin to participate in a sport or physical activity, they usually experience further socialization into the values and practices of that particular sporting culture.

Just who or what can be suggested as the principal stimulus in children's involvement in sport is a debateable point. Much research has suggested that the family is the key social agent at work (e.g. Brennan and Bleakley, 1997; Snyder and Spreitzer, 1973), yet my own experiences contradict such a view. Neither of my parents took any interest in sport during my childhood and my two elder sisters actively resisted competitive physical activity. I can claim with little doubt that it was my peers and later my teachers that acted as the most important predictors of my involvement (see also Kenyon, 1969). In fact, I may claim that it

was I that socialised my parents into sport, insisting that they dutifully brave the cold and the wet to watch me play football on a Sunday. It is only since this time that they now sit and watch football and rugby England internationals, and my mother, in particular, keeps one eye on the progress of my beloved Liverpool FC as well as somewhat apathetically following her home town's (Leicester) movements in the football league.

I do not, however, discount the role of the family as an influence in sport participation. Indeed, while my family did not actively encourage me to play sport, they whole-heartedly supported my involvement. Brennan and Bleakley (1997: 80) cite the Sports Council for Northern Ireland (SCNI) survey to illustrate the prominence of parental and family support as socialising agents. For example, 39% of young people mentioned family members as being the key influence upon their interest and involvement in sport, with the father being the most influential figure within the family (21%). Moreover, research has suggested that children are more likely to participate in sport if their parents do (Greendorfer, 1983; Hendry *et al*, 1993; McPherson, Curtis and Loy, 1989) and the preferred sports of children tend to reflect the chosen sport of the same-sex parent (Hendry *et al*, 1993).

The Family

The family is arguably the most influential institution in an individual's life, particularly during childhood and adolescence, and especially in establishing social identities in terms of class, race and gender. Jaffe (1991) highlights that boys become more concerned about gender role and identity than girls, because boys are more likely to be ridiculed for displaying 'feminine' traits than girls are for showing 'masculine' traits. This is an arguable point, but what is clear is that parental reinforcement of traditional gender behaviours influences children's patterns and preferences, either through direct intervention (e.g. object selection, encouragement, pressure, punishment), through the child imitating same-sex parent behaviour (Fling and Manosevitz, 1972; Greendorfer, 1983), or through rebellion against parental authority.

Humberstone (2002) acknowledges that sex-typing begins immediately at the birth of a child, when it is customary to exclaim, 'it's a boy' or 'it's a girl'. Parents continue this premise of gender difference and traditionally dress a boy in blue and a girl in pink. Indeed, Jaffe (1991) notes that, in most domains, many critical stereotyped preferences are displayed before the child reaches the age of two. It is, of course, important to note here that gender and, indeed, other aspects of the self are not solely constructed during childhood, but throughout our entire life-cycle. However, most of these socialising processes do occur at a young age when our learning is largely unconscious and, as such, is experienced as natural and taken-for-granted.

Smolak (1986: 227) suggests that parental concern about sex-appropriate play is regularly expressed through room décor and toy selection:

> The décor and objects in the rooms of boys are different from those typically found in girls' rooms [...] Boys are more likely to be given trucks, construction sets and sports equipment. Girls' toys are more likely to include dolls and their accompanying paraphernalia.

Further to this, masculine and feminine toys elicit different patterns of parent-child interaction (Jaffe, 1991). In the nuclear family, Caldera, Huston and O'Brien (1989) suggest, mothers, but especially fathers, express greater enthusiasm for a toy that is stereotyped for a child's gender, and toy selection for boys is regularly geared towards a future in sport (Branta *et al*, 1987).

Indeed, especially in the 1980s and 1990s, much academic and political literature assumed the nuclear family to be the bedrock of 'stable' adult identities and a secure, prosperous society. At a rhetorical level this seems relatively unproblematic: 'strong families' make for strong identities, which are powerful in their affirmation of society. However, what is often overlooked is that the family cannot, and should not, be subjected to a clear, homogeneous definition. The 'modern' family of Western societies is regularly being redefined amidst a tide of challenges to notions of compulsory heterosexuality and increasingly atheist inclinations (Whitehead, 2002). In short, women and men are fashioning new ways of living together (and apart), consequencing in such social facets as the

widespread renouncement of the sanctity of marriage, burgeoning divorce rates, and the decline of the 'traditional' family from 38 per cent of all British households in 1961 to 23 per cent in 1998 (Social Trends, 1999).

Despite the views of some political figures of recent times, however, these disruptions to traditional notions of the family do not automatically usher in social disorder (Whitehead, 2002). Indeed, numerous studies have suggested that women and men continue to define themselves, socially and ontologically, as members of a family (see especially Silva and Smart, 1999), and children's primary socialisation may change little as a result (see Parish, 1981; Raschke and Raschke, 1979). Of the eight football players I interviewed in this study, three had parents that were no longer together (Daniel, Michael and Sean). Michael's parents had only recently separated (in 2002), while Daniel and Sean were both much younger when their respective parents were divorced. It is worth noting, however, that these two players did not feel in any way affected – at least in terms of their nurturing – suggesting that their lives maintained a voice of both male and female authority through continued contact with both natural parents and their new respective partners, as well as remaining in habitation with siblings. Essentially, they felt that, although their family situation had changed, their parent's behaviour towards them had not. Sean himself made this point:

> S: I must have been four or five when dad and my mum split-up. I don't remember it at all – I don't really remember them being together at all. I guess it must have been quite a nice divorce, if you know what I mean – I lived with dad because he was like working and everything, but my mum was always around still and they took like equal responsibility for me... for my upbringing, you know?
>
> *BC: Did either your mum or your dad remarry?*
>
> S: Yeah, dad did like a couple of years later, and mum has just remarried, erm... about a year ago now. My step-mum and step-dad are both cool. [My step-mother] obviously lived with us – me, my brother and sister – and she like did stuff about the house and had like a hand in our upbringing, but she didn't, like, come to parent's evenings at school and stuff – dad and mum still did that. She used to go with dad to watch me play football and stuff and to watch my brother play rugby, and mum would sometimes come too... but separately. It wasn't like having two

> mums or anything. My step-mum – I don't really even call her my step-mum – was more like a... I dunno... kind of another member of the family, but not a mum if you know what I mean? I've got two stepbrothers – I don't think I mentioned that before – but they're much older and never lived with us. She was more motherly to my sister I think – they kind of did lots of stuff together... but so did mum – mum and my sister have a good relationship too.
>
> (Sean)

Evidence from previous research has few clear messages to tell us about family 'type' and child development and socialisation (Hendry *et al*, 1993). Certainly in Sean's case, and also for Daniel, they have never really known anything other than the family life they have now, and neither feels that their childhood and adolescence can be far removed from 'the norm'. While the designation of the family itself remains somewhat ambiguous, the rhetoric within and proximate to the institution as a whole is seemingly unproblematic – at least until accessible research can suggest otherwise. The family is acknowledged to be the social institution that has the most significant influence on the development of the individual. Parents (biological or otherwise) act as role models, standard setters and reward dispensers in cognitive and self-concept development, in identity achievement and in sex-role identification (Hendry *et al*, 1993).

Research has shown that the parent's behaviour towards their children differs according to the sex of the child (Grabrucker, 1988; Greendorfer, 1983: Lewko and Greendorfer, 1978; Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974) and is the most likely influence in early (pre-school) sports participation (Greendorfer, 1983, 1992; Kremer, 1997; Lewko and Greendorfer, 1988; Orlick, 1972; Scully and Clarke, 1997; Stevenson, 1990).

Father's Influence

> My dad was a real [Glasgow] Rangers fan. He used to take me to Ibrox to see the Rangers play.
>
> (Dalglish, 1996: 2)

> [My father] dedicated many years to his labour of love, which was moulding me into a professional soccer player [...] Dad painstakingly charted my course from skinny, underdeveloped

> teenager to battle-hardened Premiership and international midfielder.
>
> (Batty, 2001: 2)

> Dad started pushing me into football. He pushed me hard because he wanted me to do well but also because he's like that anyway – a bit obstinate.
>
> (Pearce, 2000: 40-1)

The above autobiographical extracts provide quite stark and telling recollections of a father's influence on some of the more celebrated British professional football players of the last quarter of a century (Kenny Dalglish, David Batty and Stuart Pearce). What is perhaps most interesting about these citations is the variation in the intensity of the respective fathers' impacts, ranging from the effortless sharing of a passion (Dalglish, 1996), to 'painstaking' involvement and encouragement (Batty, 2001), to acute proactivity and tenacity (Pearce, 2000). What is common to all of these footballer's autobiographies, however, is that the 'promise of sport' is made, initially at least, by the father (see also Messner, 1990b).

Indeed, my own interviews in the course of this research revealed similar themes. Seven of the eight football players I interviewed spoke of their fathers as a major influence on their football lives and identities in one way or another. However, the different ways in which the father impacted upon the men's football characters can be broken down into a more distinct set of stimuli:

- sharing of a passion;
- imitation;
- coercion;
- and support and encouragement.

The latter of these may be viewed as being somewhat different from those listed before it. The support of a young person's participation in football is an influence that is subsequent to their initial involvement, whereas the proceeding three motivations may be seen as the origins of football participation. I will now discuss each of these stimuli in turn. It is important to note, however, that the football players examined here do not necessarily consider *one* motivation in

isolation; rather, for some of the men, the father's influence appeared as an amalgamation of more than one footballing interaction.

Although boys' involvement in sport might be seen in wider society as 'natural', and come to be seen as such by the boys themselves, many may need to be 'exposed' to sport in the first instance (see Messner, 1990b). The fact that boys' introductions to organised sports are often made by fathers who might otherwise be absent or emotionally distant adds a powerful emotional charge to those early experiences (Osherson, 1986). As if to echo the words of Osherson (1986) and others, such as Brandth and Kvande (1998), Richard suggests that the only real connection or emotional bond he had with his father came about through attempting to share an interest in football:

> [M]y dad's quite quiet and keeps himself to himself, sort of thing [...] I mean, I do get along with my dad – I always did. He used to take me to football and stuff, even though he wasn't that into football, but we never really shared much else in common.
>
> (Richard)

Indeed, while many of the men interviewed in this study talk at some length about family members and their relationships with them, the subject of fathers tends to be correlated with the subject of football. Some of the players discuss this correlation in terms of the father sharing his football experiences with them:

> My dad used to play [football] on a Sunday for the local pub team, or whatever. I can't remember if it was a pub team or a local Sunday league team. I just used to go along and watch him, and then I obviously played at school and that.
>
> (Daniel)

> I used to go watch [my dad play football] when I was little, and he used to play with me in the garden, or whatever. We always had a football as long as I can remember, even if it was just one of them little plastic ones that flies about all over the place.
>
> (Daniel)

> When I was about four or five, my dad used to take me to go and watch Wycombe [Wanderers football club], when their ground was next to the hospital, 'cus he was involved with the supporters association and things like that, so I used to go to games now and then.

(Michael)

There was a marked respect for fathers evidenced among all of the men I interviewed, yet most of these players seemed to know very little about the intimate lives of their fathers. They were regularly talked about retrospectively, as distant, inaccessible figures, shrouded in a mist of the unknowing. However, memories of father-son contact through sport tended to be especially clear – trips to see a professional football game, watching football on the television on a Saturday afternoon, watching their fathers play on a Sunday, or a leisurely kick-a-bout in the back garden (see also Messner, 1992). For these men, not only were these occasions an introduction to the world of football, but they were also a shared experience of a passion – a first glimpse of their fathers' inner lives – which may have contributed to a future zest for the sport.

Some of the men I interviewed suggested that they were more than simply 'exposed' to football by their fathers. For these players the initial introduction to the national sport quickly developed into positive encouragement. Particularly those men whose fathers played football earlier in their lives perceived it to be quite 'natural' for them to do the same:

> I wouldn't say he forced me, he just encouraged. Because he played football it was a natural way for me to go.
>
> (Daniel)

> I always knew that I would play. My dad was pretty good at football and when I used to watch him I kind of knew that that would be me when I was his age [...] he always pushed me to follow in his footsteps kind of thing.
>
> (Sean)

> [My dad] played at quite a high level and he was well known for playing football. I wouldn't mind being like that [...] He was quite a big influence on me playing football.
>
> (Michael)

Some research has shown that children are more likely to participate in a sport if a same-sex parent does (Greendorfer, 1983; McPherson, Curtis and Loy, 1989), and it is clear from the players' words (above) that a certain amount of reverence and imitation was at work in their choice to play football. More than this, though, it is evident that many of these men were gently (or in some cases steadfastly)

'pushed' by their fathers to become involved in youth football. Daniel maintained that he was simply encouraged to play by his father, rather than forced, but he also recalls that, to an extent, he was emotionally compelled to persist in playing the chosen sport of his father:

> After a while I kind of had to keep playing because my dad stopped playing on a Sunday so that I could – because he used to take me on a Sunday, but to do that he had to stop playing himself.
>
> (Daniel)

Here Daniel's father – perhaps unintentionally – placed a great deal of pressure on his son to keep playing football. The burden of not wishing to disappoint one's parents is something that many of us can relate to, but that weight is perhaps multiplied when a personal sacrifice has been made for the cause. Daniel's burden, however, was considerably easier to bear because of the gratification he took from playing football. For others the experience of being coerced into the sport was an altogether less joyous affair.

Two of the football players did not have particularly fond memories of their first football experiences. Steve's story of early participation is especially interesting because it highlights not only his father's impassioned approach to his son's development as a footballer, but also the competitive, hierarchical structures and conditional self-worth attached to competence in sport. Steve was born and raised in Denmark (a country with a similar passion for football as England) and his reflections of playing youth football are worth quoting at some length:

> S: I started at four or five, maybe. My dad dragged me along and I was kicking and screaming almost, because I didn't really like it back then.
>
> *BC: Why did your dad make you play, do you think?*
>
> S: Because my dad's like, erm... he's a big follower of football. In a way he wanted to see me play and, er... he pulled me along kind of thing [...] I'd be like... I was like really afraid of people and I didn't want the ball and I was kind of like really nervous, kind of thing. So I didn't really like it, but I kept playing until I, erm... to please my dad, kind of thing... and then he became the coach as well! He'd be angry with me if I was shit. [One match] he put me down as right-back and I wasn't the fastest kid

> in the world so I was like absolutely murdered in that game by their left-wing. So then, the next training session [my dad] said, 'shocking behaviour', 'the worst performance I've ever seen', and he just like made me feel shit and all the other kids and their dads and stuff were looking at me laughing... some of them were laughing, so I just said 'fuck you' and walked off. He apologised later when we got home... but he gave me an earful for swearing at him as well (*laughs*).
>
> (Steve)

Steve's experience is reminiscent of some of those described by Messner (1992), involving young (American) men and the American national sport of baseball. Here there is an expectation by fathers – particularly when they are also the coach – that their son should be the star of the team. In his youth, Steve's father played football at the highest level in Denmark (before the introduction of professionalism in the late 1970's) and was an accomplished player. His football career, however, ended prematurely as with the birth of his first child arose a need to work longer hours and spend more time at home, and training five nights a week for no pay became impractical. As Steve notes, "he didn't really have an option, so he stopped... I think he was a bit pissed off about it, but he didn't have any option". Messner (1992) suggests that some fathers do appear to use their sons to live out their own athletic fantasies. This is not necessarily an explanation for the behaviour of Steve's father, but Steve does describe his participation in football – despite his obvious trepidation – as 'a father and son thing', and added 'he just wanted me to play'.

Sean also suggested that his father 'pressurised' him into playing for the local youth team and that he would attend his matches every week and would 'shout and swear and criticise me from the sidelines'. Upon further reflection, Sean professed to actually quite liking football 'once [he] got into it and got [his] knees dirty', and discovered that he had a talent for the game. However, he also expressed his aversion to his 'overly critical' father and not having a choice in his initial participation.

Both these player's comments are interesting, especially considering the pleasure the sport now gives them and the gratitude they now express for their father's coercion:

> I'm now glad dad was... erm... that he pushed me so hard and was on my case all the time. It really improved me... like as a player, and I gradually grew to enjoy it and I became like football crazy as I am today.
>
> (Steve)

> I understood why [dad] wanted me to play, but I really hated it when he'd come along and start effing and blinding at me, but now I'm like... football's like my life, so I'm happy he... kept on at me kind of thing, 'cus it's made me a better player.
>
> (Sean)

Steve and Sean's experiences reflect much previous research about father and son relationships and shared sporting experiences. In many cases, intimacy and an emotional bond between father and son is only achieved symbolically through a shared activity. Here, it is suggested, young boys may only be able to identify with the athletic, competitive values advocated by their fathers (Messner, 1990b, 1992), and may become 'trapped' into performing deeds and accomplishments as a means of demonstrating and seeking affection (Osherson, 1986).

It is, of course, well worth noting that only two of the eight football players interviewed experienced such extreme pressure to play the sport. The majority did not describe fathers who 'pushed' them into their sporting roles, although many did suggest an altogether more gentle persuasion and a correlation between their football participation and identification with their respective fathers. What is common, however, to all but one of these eight men is that they received the support of their fathers in some way or another, through active encouragement or coercion, sideline support, or lifts to and from matches on a Sunday.

Andrew was the only player to suggest that he did not receive this support from his father. Instead a greater emphasis was placed upon his academic work with a view to looking after his family in the future:

> My dad used to speak to me when I was young. He used to tell me what his father told him, he used to tell me that, 'when you grow up'... well first of all he said, 'I won't be around forever, so when you grow up, hopefully you can carry on what I am trying to organise for the house, for the family'. I felt a lot of

> pressure on my shoulders. My GCSE grades were compared with my older sister's. I was supposed to be better than her; I was supposed to be the front-runner for the house, to look after my family.
>
> (Andrew)

Andrew was the only black player on the team and, although he and his two sisters were born and raised in London, his parents were Ghanaian. When I asked him about the family culture in Ghana, his response was revealing:

> It's the same as here. Like the men are the breadwinners and the women are supposed to stay at home in the kitchen. I'd say that my family, they never brought me up like that though.
>
> (Andrew)

In a seemingly quite stringent, traditional patriarchal upbringing, Andrew's father seems quite resolute that his only son will take over the responsibilities of providing for the family and, for this, solid and consistent academic performances are deemed far more important than football:

> I remember there being a lot of pressure. There still is sometimes. Sometimes when I had football training, my parents would say that I should get to my books rather than mucking around. [...] They just wanted me to study for my GCSE's. There was a lot of pressure.
>
> (Andrew)

Andrew was one of the more technically gifted players on the team, evidenced by trials for both Millwall and Charlton Athletic. At one point during the interview he recounted with some annoyance that he had been scouted (watched and selected for trials) by Premier League club, Tottenham Hotspur, when he was thirteen or fourteen, but the scout and Andrew's local team coach had spoken to his father, and Andrew himself did not learn of this until a couple of years later:

> A: When I did find out I wanted to quit... I wanted to finish. I thought that that was my big break and I had missed it.
>
> *BC: How did you feel about your father and your coach not telling you about it?*
>
> A: I was really angry at first. Not really with my coach, 'cus he was just doing what he had to really, but with my dad. But what

> could I do? He was my dad and he just wanted me to do well at my schoolwork.
>
> *BC: Was your academic work important to you?*
>
> A: I looked forward to playing football more than going to school. My school was fine, but I just looked forward to playing football too much and didn't feel I needed to spend too much time with my academic work. My parents did everything they could to make me study, but I never really felt that it was for me. When I should have been at home studying, I was out playing football [...] so I never really concentrated on my academic work.
>
> (Andrew)

Andrew's story is contradictory to much previous research, where the father is found to be actively supportive of his son's sporting interests (e.g. Loy, McPherson and Kenyon, 1978; Messner, 1990b, 1992; Osherson, 1986; Snyder and Spreitzer, 1973). Certainly among the men that I interviewed, Andrew's father was the only one that is suggested to be unsupportive (and even destructive) of his son's football participation. Even those players who suggested that their fathers had little interest in football themselves note that their dads were none-the-less encouraging and actually developed an interest in the game because of their involvement (e.g. Richard and Brad) (see also Hasbrook, 1982; Snyder and Purdy, 1982).

Mother's Support

The role of the mother in terms of these men's sporting interests is also important to consider. According to Woodward (1997) motherhood as an identity is rooted in the biological as well as the social and the symbolic, where nurturing and caring for children are more 'natural' qualities. Unlike fathers, mothers may not need the medium of a shared activity to express love and affection for their sons. Of the eight men interviewed for this study, five suggested they were almost certainly closer to their mother than their father. Reasons given for this all took a similar theme:

> My dad never seemed to be around that much because he was always going back and forth to Ghana, so I kind of lost contact with him. [...] If I was ever, like, having any problems then... with school or anything, then I'd always go to mum.

(Andrew)

> She's more open while my dad's quite quiet and keeps himself to himself sort of thing.
>
> (Richard)

> Other than about football, me and my dad never really spoke to each other. It's like, my mum was my parent and my dad was more like my football coach (*laughs*).
>
> (Steve)

Aside from football experiences then, fathers seemed to be quite absent from these men's lives, leaving the nurturing role in the capable hands of the men's mothers. This, however, was not the case for those players whose parents had divorced early in their lives, and who had lived with their fathers thereafter. Daniel and Sean both indicate that their fathers took quite an active role in their development, more so than their natural mothers and their step-mothers. This is in keeping with the findings of Hendry *et al* (1993) who note that most boys in 'in-tact' families or living with their mother in a step-family claim to get on best with their mother, while boys living with their father in a step-family suggest the opposite. Perhaps, quite understandably, the role of fatherhood seems to undergo a transformation subsequent to a divorce, incorporating a greater involvement in the everyday activities and dilemmas of family life.

In all cases, the mothers of these men were not mentioned when we talked about socialisation into football. With the exception of Andrew (for whom both parents were actively unsupportive of his football), the men's mothers were supportive in terms of going to watch the games and the like, or were at least not oppositional to their son's football participation. It is also worth noting that none of these men considered their mother to be 'sporty', whereas many of the men talked about their fathers' involvement in sport, and of that being the source of their 'natural ability'.

In terms of the fifths team players, then, the mother's role in their football identity tended to be one of support, rather than direct influence. In many cases she was something of a 'grounding' factor, reverting the attentions of these men back to their academic work and non-footballing future. Indeed, while so many young

boys have dreams of becoming professional footballers – and so few actually fulfil their dream – part of the mother's role, it seems, is to provide a back-up plan while still fuelling the dream with love, faith and encouragement.

My findings here were not altogether unanticipated. While the mother's influence on female sport participation has received some attention (e.g. Greendorfer, 1979; Loy, McPherson and Kenyon, 1978; Snyder and Spreitzer, 1973; Woodhouse, 1992), research on the mother/son relationship in sporting identity is hard to find. As Messner (1992) articulates, most of the men in his study of former professional male athletes spoke of their mothers with love, respect and even reverence, but their descriptions of early experiences in sport are of an exclusively male world.

Male Siblings

Messner's (1992) work reveals that when discussing their earliest athletic experiences, most men spoke of older brothers, who served as athletic role models or sources of competition for attention and status within the family. This was not the case in my research, where all of the men I interviewed spoke of their fathers or friends as the initiators of their football participation. Only two of the men (Sean and Steve) had older brothers, neither of whom played football. Richard and Sean also had older half-brothers or step-brothers, but both revealed that they had never lived with, nor had much contact with, these siblings, as they were much older.

Steve suggests his older brother's non-participation in football (or in any sport) may have been the reason why his father placed so much emphasis on his involvement and development as a football player:

> I think dad just kind of gave up on him... he just wasn't interested in sport... so like when I came along and showed an interest [in football] dad pushed me all the way... and my little brother too.
>
> (Steve)

Sean had a similar story to tell, except that his older brother was a sportsman, choosing rugby over football. Here, Sean's father encouraged and supported his eldest son's involvement in rugby by going to watch him play and the like, but

became far more involved with Sean when he showed an interest in 'his real passion' of football. None of the football players, therefore, felt the pressure that is often associated with the need to live up to the sporting achievements of an older sibling (see Messner, 1992). Even though Sean's brother played rugby – and as Sean tells it he is a very accomplished rugby player – contemporary discourse surrounding the two sports dictates that for a football enthusiast, such as Sean's father, participation in rugby is fairly insignificant (or even antagonistic).

Here the older brother had an influence on Steve and Sean's socialisation into football, but only indirectly. Something I suggested earlier in this chapter is that both these players' fathers were very passionate about football and the pressure and coercion that Steve and Sean felt to play may have been a corollary of their older brothers' non-participation. In asking the players to talk about their male siblings, very few of these men's brothers played sport of any kind, and none played football. Michael was the only football player I interviewed that was the eldest child in his family, with one younger brother (excluding Brad who was an only-child). He described how he and his father attempted to socialise his brother into football, but to no avail:

> He and dad used to come along and watch me play, and we all used to go together to watch Wycombe play, but he was kind of dragged along, kicking and screaming sometimes. [...] I used to take him down to the park with me for a kick-a-bout sometimes, but he never showed the interest I've got. He played for a bit at school – for about a year or so – and basically got pissed off with it.
>
> (Michael)

Here Michael attempted to fulfil the role of the older brother suggested by Messner (1992), as a role model and teacher to his younger sibling. In this respect he failed, due to his brother's lack of interest in the sport, but Messner (1992) also suggests that older brothers may perform a sport socialising role as a source of competition for attention and status within the family. This was reflected in what Michael disclosed next:

> M: He's really into mountain biking and cars. That's what he's really into – it's really quite diverse.

*BC: How do you think he possibly got into those?*

> M: Erm... I think I'd always, kind of unfairly, captured my dad's imagination, taking up football because I was the oldest, and he wanted something that he was recognised for, but in a different way.
>
> (Michael)

Daniel also deemed his younger brother's involvement in a sport other than football (in this case, golf) as a determined and conscious effort to distinguish himself from his older sibling. Here the father had a passion for both football and golf and, in Daniel's own words, 'my brother plays golf with [my dad] now, I played football with him when I was younger; it worked out quite nicely in that respect'.

Both Michael and Daniel describe their brothers' participation in sport almost as a 'gap' in which they may gain respect and status in the eyes of their father. Football was already taken by their older brothers – for which they gained some form of access to their fathers' inner lives – so a new platform was needed for the younger sibling. It is perhaps too often overlooked that the birth order of children as well as the gender of the child may have implications for the level of support and socialising influences for sport participation.

It is probably fair to say that none of these men considered their male siblings to have been a great influence on their identity as football players, other than, perhaps, the suggestion that their brothers' non-participation contributed to the development of a 'pecking order' in familial relations (particularly father/son relations). It is interesting, therefore, that some of the men discussed the *absence* of a male sibling as a significant factor in their sporting subjectivities.

Brad was an only child whose parents, although supportive of his football participation, were not particularly 'sporty'. He noted:

> Having a brother would have made a difference – someone to coach me, teach me, or even just play football with me would definitely have been good for me.
>
> (Brad)

Andrew also noted that 'if I had a brother to help me and coach me, it would be good'. Both these players make a connection between male siblings and an improved football performance. It could perhaps be suggested that their respective fathers' football indifference may have left these men craving a father-figure to guide them through the nuances of football participation, rather than a brother. Indeed, the experiences of those players who did have brothers would suggest that their male siblings' contributions to their football identity was rather insignificant, but their fathers' influence was quite considerable.

Female Siblings

Given that the BCUC football players did not consider that their male siblings had much of an impact on their sport socialisation, and taking into account the gendered nature of sport participation, one would suspect that these men's sisters would not be considered significant in terms of their footballing subjectivities. In the main, this tended to be the case, but it is important to consider female siblings' roles in the footballing identity of these men.

Six of the men had sisters, some older and some younger, and some had half-sisters and stepsisters. The men's relationships with the latter was markedly different to that of their biological siblings, evidenced by the detail that these women were rarely discussed and when they were it was usually to suggest that they had very little contact with them, even as children. Conversely, the football players' relationships with their full-sisters were suggested to be good and even close in all cases. However, one of the men suggested that although he got along well with his sisters, the relationship was not always easy to maintain:

> Me and my older sister had a few grapples when we were younger, but as we've grown up we've been really close, I'd say. My little sister – I don't mean to sound harsh on her – but she's quite... she keeps herself to herself, and I try to open her up, but... [...] The problem is we don't share much in common, I'd say. I'm like into football and stuff and she's more... kind of make-up, hairstyles... boys... that kind of thing – just very... girl-like, I say.
>
> (Andrew)

Here Andrew views his younger sister as being 'girl-like' in that she engages in activities that might be associated with traditional femininity or womanliness. As he talked about her, I imagined Andrew's sister to be an adolescent – thirteen or fourteen years of age (when conventional versions of femininity and 'being girls together' is of particular importance in identity terms (see Messner, 2002) – and was surprised to discover that she was actually nineteen, out of school and working for a living. When asked what it was she did for a living, Andrew's response further confirmed the 'girl-like' image he had of her:

> Not a lot from what she tells me (*laughs*). She's a receptionist for some accountants in London. She just sits there looking pretty and filing her nails (*laughs*).
>
> (Andrew)

What is particularly interesting in the two passages from my interview with Andrew is his 'feminine' representation of his younger sister, alluding to her job, quietness, good looks and narcissism and the juxtaposition with her not sharing his interest in football. Therefore, the 'maleness' of football is set in stark contrast to the effeminacies of vanity, attractiveness and timidity.

Daniel also alluded to the union between one of his sister's non-participation in sport and a traditionally feminine image:

> My little sister has never been interested in sport at all. She's more into like drama and dance and performing arts and that rubbish.
>
> (Daniel)

'That rubbish' is perhaps viewed as an altogether more 'female appropriate' activity, and one that Daniel does not relate to in any way. Indeed, all of the players suggested that their sisters were not at all sporty and were instead interested in activities that may be seen as more conventionally 'feminine'. Steve was the only exception, as his younger sister did play football for a while, but, as he articulates, 'you know girls at that age, they do what their friends do, so it was like handball for a year, football for a year, then she did riding and now it's all about going out with her mates and smoking and drinking'. Contrary to some of

the findings of Harris (1998), Steve's sister was not socialised into playing football by her brother's participation, but by same-sex friends.

For all of these men, football was a strictly male only affair in the context of their families. They all suggest that their sisters did not really express any interest in sport at all and certainly weren't given any encouragement from their parents. Some of them did come to watch their brothers play, but only out of a sense of duty or because they were not given any choice in the matter:

> They watch, but only because I play and dad plays, and one of my older half-sisters' husbands and boys play and enjoy it, so she pretends to take an interest because of that.
>
> (Daniel)

> She wasn't really interested but when I became interested she had to be I think.
>
> (Gary)

Indeed, some of the men's sisters were coerced into some involvement with the sport because of their brother's participation, and for one of the players, this process worked the other way, and he became involved in an activity because of his sisters' participation:

> I can remember going to a singing club with my sisters. I didn't really want to go there, but my mum encouraged me to go. My sisters, they can sing... I don't like singing, but I went. [...] I used to go to this club and sing and dance, and we used to do some plays... this was when I was about seven or eight. I was playing football too at this age.
>
> (Andrew)

Andrew appeared to repeatedly defend his male status by suggesting that, although he was singing and dancing, he did not really want to and did not like it, and that he was also involved in the 'more masculine' sport of football. The suggestion that it was his mother who encouraged him to go with his sisters is consistent with Nieminien's (1997) research on socialisation into dance, which suggests that mothers are the most salient influence amongst both male and female dancers. I asked Andrew if there were many other boys at this club, to which he responded negatively and noted that 'that worried me a bit'. He also

noted that he didn't tell any of his football friends and peers about his participation in what may (in Andrew's view) have been considered an 'unmasculine' activity, suggesting that the identities and subjectivities associated with each pursuit could not easily come together.

This, for Andrew, was something of a shame, because through singing, dance and drama he realised some identification with his mother and father that he had not been able to achieve through football:

> I kind of enjoyed it because I was in the limelight. When we did plays, my mum and dad used to come and watch, which I thought... they never used to come and watch me play football. So they came to watch and I was getting a lot of attention, and I like it a lot.
>
> (Andrew)

This goes to highlight that identities and subjectivities are a complex web of interlocking groups (see Bradley, 1996; Griffiths, 1995), defined by a degree of social fragmentation where social ties (in this case family ties) that create feelings of belonging and a 'stable adult identity' do not necessarily complement identities founded in a different context (such as a football sub-cultural context).

Schooling, Peers and P.E.

The school environment has long provided an arena for the socialisation of individuals into sport, and through the structures and rituals within the school sport experience, boys have been socialised into a traditional moral manliness (Holt, 1989; Mangan, 1987; Mangan and McKenzie, 2000). Arguably of greater significance than any other factor, school is an institution that enables young boys to mix with 'new' people, such as girls and people from different social backgrounds, in greater numbers than they may have done in pre-school life.

Sport socialisation may be seen to be achieved in school in two ways: association with same-sex peers and the physical education curriculum itself, and both may reinforce and develop the gendered social roles realised by way of the family (Newman, 1997).

Busby (1997: 196) notes that, 'contextual variables such as opportunity to exercise, awareness of what is available and location will undoubtedly play a role in any decision to participate in physical activity'. School may be seen to provide all of these, and it is therefore likely that attending school plays a pivotal role in fostering an interest in sport. Indeed, Scully and Clarke (1997: 46) identify school as the primary reason for young people attempting a sport (the answer given by 31.3% of those young people surveyed), and the common curriculum brought about the standardisation of a wide range of sporting opportunities for both males and females (Hargreaves, 1994; Mahoney, 1997).

However, young people do not share equally in the fruits of this Government sentiment. Flintoff (1990), for example, notes that the National Curriculum does little to allay the gendered dichotomy within school sports as it fails to challenge the innate sexism and masculinism at the heart of physical and competitive activity. Likewise, Skelton (2000) identifies how sport in schools (particularly soccer, which tends to be the most popular school activity) is inscribed with broader structural issues, and is therefore central to the gender regime of schools and wider society. Essentially, there are many cultural barriers to female participation in sport, even where the curriculum offers the opportunity to do so. Simultaneously, males are pushed toward participation in school sport by its perceived cultural importance.

As Kew (1997) suggests, adolescent culture for girls has little place for sport and, in contrast to boys, little peer group status is attached to sporting prowess. Rather, there is a certain cachet gained from indulgence in fashion, romance and music, though, as Kew notes, there is a class dimension to this, and middle class girls are much more likely to value sports participation than working class girls.

Boys, on the other hand, gain a masculinised identity through participation in sport and, while, particularly in secondary education, there remains some status attached to such things as romance – with an appropriately 'attractive' girl – this is often achieved via the identity gained through sporting prowess (Messner, 1992; Renold, 1997).

In British schooling, soccer maintains a pivotal position for boys in PE lessons, break time, lunchtime and extracurricular activities. This is most likely due to the ease of playing the game in terms of the space and equipment needed (Sports Council for Wales, 1995), and also due to the centrality of soccer to British society. This section of the chapter is concerned with football (and other sports) experiences of the football players through their schooling and the subjective agents at work within this potent socialising structure.

Early P.E. Experiences

As I recall, football was never a feature of my earliest PE experiences. Instead, PE was concerned with finding new and innovative ways of 'moving' across the floor and over objects, all-the-while hampered by ridiculously short shorts (as was the style in the 1980s), an oversized white t-shirt and slip-on black plimsolls that would never stay on my feet. Like many parents, my mother would buy my clothes on the premise that I would 'grow into them', and in the meantime I would just have to make-do. At this time activities were the same for boys and girls and tended not to reflect gendered sport stereotypes. Indeed, with pursuits such as dance, gymnastics and games involving balloons and beanbags, if anything, these PE lessons may be seen in opposition to the masculinisation of the sports arena.

Similarly, the early PE experiences of the men I interviewed involved recollections of basic gymnastics, 'apparatus and wall-bars and ropes' (Michael), 'random stuff like throwing a ball and catching while hopping on one leg' (Richard), 'dancing and moving to music and stuff like that' (Gary), 'climbing up on a bench and then jumping off' (Sean), and 'movement, where you do all your silly moving about' (Daniel). The fiercely competitive values that mark the masculinised disposition of sport were rarely encountered during these earliest of PE experiences where 'just [doing] your best and helping out and cooperating with others' were the backbone of these lessons (Andrew).

One of the players did recall an attempt by his PE teacher to introduce football and netball into the mix, but with little success:

> The only thing we did outside was like when they attempted to do netball and football with us, which didn't really work 'cus hardly anyone knew the rules and the girls couldn't be bothered and everyone else just kind of kicked the ball as far as they could and then everyone would chase it, and in netball, everyone would just try to shoot no matter where they were on the field or would run with the ball.
>
> (Daniel)

All of the men were playing football at this time, but only on the playground or outside of school and, for most, just kicking the ball about with (male) friends rather than within a team of any kind. As the men got a little older, competitive sport was introduced to their school lives in the form of lunchtime or after-school clubs and teams, and into PE lessons.

It is worth noting that at this point in most of men's schooling, PE lessons were segregated by each individual class, rather than by year-group and gender, which is common to most secondary schools. Thus, PE lessons tended to be mixed sex and overseen by the teacher that the men had for every other subject as well, be they male or female. The teacher that these men had would change as they went up a year, and all of the men recall having a mix of male and female teachers over the course of their primary school education.

All of the men remembered playing rounders at primary school or middle school, and some recalled playing netball as well. Although these activities may be rendered more 'appropriate' for girls' participation, for Richard this did not seem to be a problem:

> That didn't really occur to me at the time, because all of the boys had to play anyway, and we were far better than the girls were. [...] When we played rounders, the boys would like just whack it [*the ball*] as hard as they could, and you'd always hit it in a girls direction 'cus you knew they wouldn't be able to catch it. [...] [In netball] we'd just make it like a lads game and didn't really pass it to the girls, 'cus they'd just mess it up.
>
> (Richard)

Brad described a similar scenario, noting that although PE lessons were mixed, they were all about the 'boys playing to win and the girls just standing around'. Brad also noted, as did Gary and Michael, that when playing netball not all the

boys were included in the game, and 'you only really passed to your mates or the guys that you knew were good' (Michael).

These men demonstrate that even at an early age they were aware of and actively contributing to the 'exclusivity' of sport. As expressed by some critics of the National Curriculum for PE (e.g. Flintoff, 1990; Scraton, 1992), school sports often reinforce dominant conceptions of sport as a male domain. Although this view tends to be concerned with secondary school PE, the men in this study also describe their early experiences – despite being mixed sex – as an exclusively male arena in which sporting ability is essential, where the girls and some boys were perceived to be less proficient and thus not included.

Girls may often find PE experiences debarring and unnerving. As Chappel (1989) and Harris (1998) reveal, girls' experiences of physical education are rarely positive, and recollections of PE lessons tend to involve feelings of exclusion, pain and discomfort. It is not enough, however, to simply explore the sex-determined inequality in sport socialisation in schools. Rather, sociologists also need to behold the relationship between dominant and marginalised masculinities, which, as Renold (1997) asserts, is rarely visible in studies of inequality in young people's sport.

Among the men I interviewed, football was the dominant sport for boys in their primary schools. For most of these men, football was the only sport catered for by a school team. Although football participation in PE lessons remained mixed sex, the school teams were all male and it was the boys that played for the school team that dominated the proceedings in these PE lessons:

> When we played football in PE it was like just the guys that played for the school team really. We were usually allowed to go off on our own and take some shots at goal and stuff while everyone else, like the girls and the ones that didn't play or weren't any good, would do some like basic skills with the teacher. [...] We'd always finish with a big game but me and the lads would just like play against each other and not pass the ball – just showing off really I guess. We'd like go in and tackle each other even if we were playing on the same team (*laughs*).

> [...] If anyone else did get the ball they'd... like just pass it straight to one us, 'cus they knew we'd do something with it.
>
> (Sean)

Here Sean depicts not only a football experience that excludes the girls, but also the boys that were not recognised for playing football. He also notes that 'non-footballing' boys would always pass the ball to one of the school team players, recognising that they were far more proficient. Many of the men related to this, noting that they were well known in their respective primary or middle schools for being good footballers. Moreover, most of the men suggested that their circle of friends at this age was made-up almost entirely of football players and few others were allowed in. Here the men showed the first signs of concurrence with the prevalent notion that sport provides boys with a 'safe' arena within which to form friendships and intimate relations with other boys (see Messner, 1992, 2002).

The perceptions of certain sports by the boys themselves and the status gained from particular sports in the eyes of peers are an important consideration in these men's football identities. Indeed, boys who participate in 'inappropriate' physical activities at school, such as dance, may be labelled 'fairies' or 'fags' (Hargreaves, 1994), whereas boys who achieve in the more 'manly' sports, such as football, acquire a certain identity and standing (Messner, 1992; Renold, 1997).

When I asked the men how they felt about the boys that did not like football or sport in general, none of them were malevolent in their replies. However, Steve, who was educated in Denmark, had this to say:

> If they don't like football or they're... erm... like a bit shit at it... erm... well that's fine. I don't have a problem with that. I have respect for people who are good at other things... other than football. [...] What I really hate is when they just don't try... like some of the kids... the fat... like non-sporty kids wouldn't even try. They'd just stand around doing fuck-all or... erm... some would just like pretend to ill or forget... like 'accidentally on-purpose' forget their kit. I just don't get that... not at all.
>
> (Steve)

I too remember the boys who would seemingly do anything to avoid the weekly dose of physical activity and sport at school. Like Steve, with my judgement

somewhat clouded by my own love of sport and enjoyment of PE lessons, I was unable to understand why so many (perhaps even the majority) became despondent at the thought of doing sport. With hindsight, however, I realise that it is only a few boys (and even fewer girls) that find a 'niche' in school life in PE, due in part to the competitive, game centred nature of the physical education curriculum. As Evans *et al* (1996: 167) note, in this masculinised environment:

> Many pupils learn that they have neither ability, status nor value and that the most judicious course of action to be taken in protection of their fragile educational physical identities is to adopt a plague-like avoidance of its damaging activities.

Moreover, the reasons given for girls' resistance to PE – that have been well documented in recent years (see especially Flintoff and Scraton, 2001) – are concerns that are shared by several boys, which can also lead to resistance and absenteeism (Bramham, 2003).

Some research has suggested that primary schools place a great deal of value on football in terms of enhancing their own status and that of their (male) pupils (Clarricoates, 1978; Skelton, 2000), and football success is seen to be of greater importance than academic success by the teachers of these boys. Many of the men I interviewed reflected this view, as they spoke of the identity they achieved in the eyes of some of their teachers:

> Loads of the teachers... probably all of them, I'd say, would come up on the field after school to watch if we were playing. It was kind of cool that they took an interest and all knew that... who played for the school team. My teacher, Mr. Kendall... the next day, like after he'd watched us play... erm... in the middle of lessons and stuff me and him would just be talking about the match instead of other work.
>
> (Anthony)

> All the teachers knew who I was 'cus I captained the football team. I got on really well with all of them and they'd always stop and talk to me about football and things like that.
>
> (Brad)

Even at primary school, then, these men were becoming recognised for their abilities as football players, and formulating a large part of their male identity around this, rather than academic success.

Secondary School P.E. Experiences

Mac an Ghaill (1994) identifies that playing football, in a secondary school context, is crucial in the acquisition of the 'the three F's' of traditional masculinity – fighting, fucking and football. From this perspective, football secures a spoken or unspoken affiliation with masculinity, and boys and girls come to view it as a male activity. Moreover, the boys' monopolisation of football – in PE lessons, teacher/pupil conversations and on the playground – may have broadened patterns of segregation between boys and girls, leading to further exclusion of girls who wished to participate (see also Delamont, 1980).

Football for boys, then, is associated with a certain identity among peers and teachers, and it is an identity that most boys endeavour to acquire. Thus, boys are more likely to participate in football at school than girls (even where girls are able to participate in football-centred PE lessons), as female sport tends to acquire little prestige in comparison to other activities (see also Kew, 1997). If anything, the gender dichotomy inherent to the physical education curriculum only increases with the step-up from primary to secondary education. A great deal more activities become available to secondary school students, with rugby, athletics, tennis, badminton, volleyball, swimming, circuit training, basketball and cricket among the sports mentioned by the men in this study as additional to those on offer in their primary schools. With this increase in activities there was also a more rigid framing of certain pursuits as masculine or feminine, and sex-segregation became common to most of these (see also Scraton, 1988). Only athletics, badminton, volleyball and swimming were noted to be 'mixed' sessions by these men, and even here the 'mixed' group tended to split into male and female, rather than girls and boys competing against each other. The only PE activity that was recalled to be 'truly mixed' was gymnastics, which (at a schooling level) is primarily participatory rather than competitive.

Few of the men were able to give a clear picture of what the girls were doing while they were in their all-male groups for football, rugby, basketball and the like. Most suggested hockey, dance, rounders and netball, but were generally unsure. These activities were not available to the boys at secondary school, despite dance, rounders and netball being a key component of their primary school PE lessons. One may draw a parallel here with girls' participation in 'masculine' sports such as football, in that masculine behaviour is generally tolerated from girls at primary school age on the basis that they will 'grow out of it' (see Harris, 1998). For boys, dance, rounders and netball appear to be acceptable (even forcibly encouraged) activities at a young age, but with the move up to secondary school and the imminent emergence of adolescence, the effeminacies associated with these sports are then deemed unacceptable and erased from the curriculum.

The broadening of the physical education curriculum at secondary school may intensify the disparity in physical activity participation rates between boys and girls (see especially Armstrong *et al*, 1990), but the disparity between boys and other boys may be closed to some extent. As I suggested earlier, football tended to dominate activities and discourses inside and outside the classroom at primary schools (see also Renold, 1997), and, consequently, only a minority of boys were able to find a 'niche' in school life here. The extended range of traditionally 'masculine' (but also technically very different) sports on offer at secondary school, however, may allow for more boys to secure a sport related 'macho' identity.

Some of the men spoke of peers who did not 'shine' in football but became involved and even represented the school at other sports when they stepped up to secondary school:

> There was a couple of guys who used to play football with us at break times and stuff [at primary school], but weren't really that good... they didn't play for the team or nothing... that like started playing basketball... and one guy I knew got really into swimming and swam for the county and stuff.
>
> (Daniel)

> A lot of people... like some of the bigger ones got quite good at rugby and started playing that and were like the best in PE and played for the school team and stuff. A lot of them like also played basketball at break times, 'cus we had a basketball net on one of the tennis courts... they used to get in the way of our football 'cus we played in like the same area (*laughs*).
>
> (Richard)

In this way, some of the boys who had no sporting identity (which often equates to male identity) at primary school were able to bolster their presence at secondary school through 'new' avenues of communication of hegemonic masculinity. That football was not the means of expression here may have little consequence, as hegemonic masculinity is embodied in physical power and competence (Connell, 1987a; Whitson, 1990), which are equally well articulated through any traditionally male, competitive sport.

Of course, such a view is problematised by issues of subjectivity, and the football players of this study still deemed football to be *the* sport for the acquisition of an eminent school identity:

> I enjoyed rugby in PE... and basketball and tennis and everything else, but they're not football are they?
>
> (Anthony)

> I was alright at all the other sports and I played rugby for a while... like on the school team, but like anyone could walk onto the rugby team... or the cricket team, but football was much more like... there was more competition to get on the team 'cus everyone wanted to play football.
>
> (Gary)

It is more than likely that a basketball player or a rugby player would suggest the same of their chosen sport, but it tends to be a widely held view that football is afforded a more prestigious place in the overall identity of both primary and secondary schools (see Clarricoates, 1978; Epstein *et al*, 2001; Renold, 1997; Skelton, 2000).

All of the men spoke fondly of their PE experiences, even when football was not on the agenda. Michael articulates:

> It didn't really matter what we did in PE. Obviously football was preferable, but I liked everything else as well. The only things I didn't really like were gymnastics and like circuit training... erm... like pushing weights, 'cus there was like no... like motivation... satisfaction, if you know what I mean?
>
> (Michael)

This suggests that Michaels may have felt that gymnastics and circuit training were isolated, participatory activities, where the competitive zeal that he equates with motivation and satisfaction was absent. Steve and Sean also expressed an aversion to non-competitive sports, with Steve asking 'what's the point?' The competitive and aggressive undertones attached to many sports (particularly team sports), which are actively encouraged within the PE curriculum (see Bramham, 2003; Humberstone, 1990), are at the centre of these men's enjoyment of physical activity. Later in the interview, I asked these men the importance of winning to them, to which they responded with comments such as 'it's essential' (Richard), 'what's the point if you don't go out to win?' (Sean), and most interestingly 'winning is everything – if you don't win it means they are better than you, and I can't have that' (Steve). These lessons are often learned in secondary school PE, where as Bramham (2003: 60) notes, hegemonic masculinity is conveyed as 'embodied power and competence, *exercised over others*' and such forms of dominance permeate everyday life and, for the powerful, 'generate status, pride and identity *at the expense of others*' (my emphasis).

The importance of competence in certain sports and the competitive values of team games are often communicated by physical education teachers. Referring to the work of Skelton (2000), there is a general consensus in the literature on schools that sporting success is as important to a school as academic achievement. Given that the most popular inter-school sports tend to be male sports such as football or rugby, boys develop closer relationships with PE teachers than girls do, and PE lessons tend to be used as opportunities to develop the boys' skills and the girls are often excluded (Skelton, 2000). Developing this, Greendorfer and Lewko (1978) reveal that physical education teachers are significant socialising agents for boys, but not for girls. Moreover, I would argue, PE teachers are significant socialising agents for 'competent' boys. The relationship between the

football players and their PE teachers, and the significance of this relationship in the football identities of these men, is where I shall now direct my attention.

The Role of the P.E. Teacher

Particularly within the pages of the academic journal *Sport, Education and Society*, the philosophies of the PE teacher and the socio-cultural discourses embedded in teaching and learning in PE has received a great deal of attention (see for example Evans *et al*, 1996; Green, 2000, 2002; Laker *et al*, 2003; O'Conner and MacDonald, 2002; Ronholt, 2002). Of particular interest and focus is the role of the PE teacher in the construction of gendered identities and the reproduction of dominant masculinities in teaching practices in PE. The role of the PE teacher is an important one to consider in the construction of student subjectivity – how children and young people are differentially positioned by the pedagogies of physical education 'classrooms' in relation to their peers, their teachers and the subject matter itself (see especially Evans *et al*, 1996).

Mangan and Hickey (2000) note the 'downward diffusion' of a traditional middle-class athleticism from teacher-training colleges to the schools and young people themselves. The relationship between gender construction and male identity and athleticism in teacher-training colleges, Mangan and Hickey posit, is significant in the gendered sport socialisation in schools. I will point out here that Mangan and Hickey's (2000) study is set in the late 19$^{th}$ century, but in terms of sport and gendering through the ages, there has been more continuity than change and the gendered nature of sports organisation are influenced by historically constructed dominant discourses (Mangan, 2000; Shaw and Slack, 2002).

Following this line of enquiry, many revisions to the physical education curriculum, such as the inclusion of girls in PE activities such as football, are unlikely to be sufficient in changing the dichotomised nature of sport socialisation in schools, because the physical education 'space' maintains certain hegemonic masculinities carried down from the earlier social and institutional structures (e.g. the family; teacher training colleges).

At secondary school at least, most of the men suggest that they only really had contact with male PE teachers. Only Gary could recall having a female teacher and described her as:

> Pretty decent, but she was just like you'd expect a female teacher to be. Like if you messed around then she'd tell you off, but you know, she wouldn't go mad at you all the time, like drill-sergeant style.
>
> (Gary)

It is interesting that Gary evokes a marked dissimilarity between male and female teachers, suggesting that female teachers are perhaps more placid and mild-mannered than their male colleagues. This would suggest an association with traditional femininity, which, for the most part, does not reflect stereotypical portrayals of female PE teachers. I remember two women PE teachers at my secondary school, one of whom bore a stark resemblance to actress Sigourney Weaver – clearly suggestive of a certain machismo. My only vivid memory of the other was of her striding down the dimly lit corridors of the school; children throwing themselves out of her path and out of harms way, reminiscent of a bowling ball ploughing its way through the centre of the pins. Somewhere along the route of my recollections, of course, this image has become exaggerated, but it does tend to reproduce the dominant label of female PE teachers as muscular and as potential lesbians.

A similar image was evoked when the men spoke of their past female PE teachers. Although none of them actually attached the label of 'lesbian' to these women, there was an implication that they may be 'heterosexual failures' in some way:

> This one teacher was like... she was quite... er... gruff, I'd say, and quite big... musclely.
>
> (Andrew)

> This is gonna sound really bad, but all the [female] teachers we had were old, a bit haggard and *really big* (his emphasis).
>
> (Daniel)

> She'd like always wear this cap... erm... it was like an old man's cap... you know like the one they all wear in Last of the Summer Wine (*laughs*).

(Sean)

The association of teaching physical education and lesbianism – which may be paralleled with the broader association of women's sport and lesbianism (see Cahn, 1994; Cox and Thompson, 2000; Halbert, 1997; Harris, 1998; Mennesson, 2000) – may have little bearing on the learning experiences of these men, particularly as most suggested that they were rarely taught by women teachers. For girls, on the other hand, the presumed correlation between being a female PE teacher and being a lesbian may create a need for the adoption of gender management strategies to ensure they are recognised as heterosexual and feminine (Flintoff, 1994: 100).

Of far more significance to these men's PE experiences are their perceptions of and relationships with male PE teachers. It was of no surprise to me that the players recalled football and rugby to be the sports that were afforded the most time and kudos, and that it was always male teachers that supervised these sessions. These sports were only available to the boys during PE lessons, although some of the men recollected there being a girls football team and after-school club at their schools. The sex-orientated availability of these sports may further socialise boys into believing that football and rugby are 'male-only' environments, but, moreover, the masculinised and competitive discourses prevalent in the teaching of these activities is likely to inspire subjectivities relating to hegemonic masculinity.

All of the men noted that they maintained good relationships with their PE teachers, and some even suggested that they were on first-name terms with the teachers that tutored them in football (a rarity in compulsory education). Michael remarked that:

> Jeff was more like one of the lads sometimes rather than [a] teacher. At lunchtimes he'd come and sit with us and talk about football and like what he did at the weekend and stuff rather than sitting on the teachers' table.
>
> (Michael)

Daniel tells a similar story:

> I remember we saw him down at the football club once... we were like there trying to get served [alcohol] (*laughs*), and he came up and started chatting to us and even bought us all a beer. [...] Most teachers would just ignore you, or maybe just say 'hello' and that's it, but he was like really cool... I mean, I know it ain't good him buying us alcohol 'cus we were only fifteen odd, but... at the time we thought it was really cool.
>
> (Daniel)

The very fact that this teacher actively encouraged the consumption of alcohol among his more proficient football students offers an indication of the association between being an athlete and being a 'big drinker', and the union of the two activities in the construction of dominant masculinities (see especially Boswell and Spade, 1996; Curry, 1998). Perhaps of more relevance here, though, is the attention given to certain boys by their PE teacher as a result of the sporting aptitude.

Two of the players suggested that male PE teachers treated non-athletic or less proficient students in the same manner as more capable sports students, but the remaining men recalled that the teachers 'couldn't be bothered with those kids' (Steve) or 'just gave up on them after a while' (Andrew). This correlates with Hendry's (1978) work, where it is suggested that pupils considered by the PE teacher to be enthusiastic, friendly, popular, physically attractive and, above all, possessing physical and technical skills were more favourably treated (and consequently had more positive attitudes towards sport).

Michael went a little further in describing the teacher's attitude to non-athletic students in rugby sessions, noting that:

> They were looked down upon. It's like that thing we read in your seminar the other day; they were almost used as tackle bags for the bigger and better lads who played rugby.
>
> (Michael)

The article Michael was referring to was Pringle's (2001) narrative representation of 'competing discourses' in sport, where he recalled from his own school days, among other things, that his PE teacher encouraged aggressive play and the infliction of pain upon smaller, less competent pupils. The principle thesis behind

this paper was that young boys have to contend with 'competing discourses' in sport, in that this aggressive and even violent style of play was encouraged in this instance, but was deemed unacceptable and punished by parents and others. As well as demonstrating the disrupted nature of identities – sourced from a broad and complex range of informants (see especially Bradley, 1996) – Pringle's (2001) work also highlights the implications of this 'hidden curriculum' of school sport, where there is often an overemphasis on competitiveness, aggression and achievement (see also Hendry, 1992). Such an emphasis is linked to the reproduction of larger systems of gender where, within this man-boy relationship, masculinity rituals are orchestrated, and selected boys (those who display traits of competency) are further encouraged to engage in appropriate behaviours, beliefs and values (Sabo and Panepinto, 1990).

For those boys who are less competent and/or confident, the mode of domination adopted by physical education teachers, which encourages displays of dominant masculinities and physical and verbal attacks (Cohen and Manion, 1981), self-esteem and confidence may be further diminished. Moreover, an arena such as this actively constructs hierarchies of power and machismo among pupils. Indeed, Parker (1996b) identified a typology of three categories of male pupil groups: 'hard boys', 'conformists' and 'victims'; identifiable by varying degrees of the embodiment of hegemonic masculinity.

The retrospective accounts of the men in this study only partially reflect these categories and, as such, like all typologies, should not be taken as strict boundaries that cannot be transgressed. Indeed, masculinity is unequivocally contextualised and the way in which boys negotiate its grain, in terms of their behaviours and the like, are likely to change with the sporting context. For example, Richard noted that, while he was a recognised football player and was quite competent at rugby and also cricket, he was less adroit when it came to track and field athletics. Here he noted that the PE teacher that oversaw this session 'didn't even know my name', and also confessed to regularly 'sneaking off to hide behind the [grass] bank with the other crap athletes'.

Further, many of the players did not consider their PE teachers to have had a great impact on the development of their sporting identity. Their comments can be summed-up in the following extract from my interview with Steve:

> Like, most people start playing football when they're like six or seven years old anyway, and that's when we start school anyway, so... I mean, we're already playing so it's not really anything to do with the PE teachers.
>
> (Steve)

The fact that all these players were already playing football prior to encountering their PE teachers would suggest that the dominant values at the centre of football culture were already at hand as informants to their individual identities. However, the gendered and competitive zeal communicated by (predominantly male) teachers in the physical education environment (Evans *et al*, 1996; Humberstone, 1990; Laker *et al*, 2003), and the itinerant nature of 'valued' masculinities – that is, the differential worth of certain masculinities in changing sport contexts – the respective PE teachers of these men may well have contributed to broader sporting identities, or at least reinforced traditional interaction values of 'officiants' (teachers) and 'initiates' (pupils) (see Sabo and Panepinto, 1990) in the football milieu.

School Sport Teams and Clubs

There is a great deal of local pride associated with the both the performance and 'toughness' school sport teams (Bramham, 2003), and many students may gain a certain identity from playing in these teams. All of the men interviewed played for their school football team at primary and secondary school levels, as well as playing outside of school for their local club. This, many noted, afforded them a certain identity with peers and teachers alike, in lessons and on the playground:

> Everyone knew who you were if you played on the school [football] team. You were like the hero... especially at my school 'cus we were pretty good and won like almost everything.
>
> (Daniel)

> We [*the football team players*] were all like... quite popular. The teachers would always ask us about the match and... I think

> they made some allowances for us as well... in like schoolwork and things. [...] And the girls... my word did they like the football players (*laughs*).
>
> (Steve)

These men's comments reflect the 'masculine positional identity' often associated with playing certain, 'appropriate' sports at the highest level (see Messner, 1992). For these men, during their school life, there was no higher level to play at than on the school team, and there was no higher regarded sport than football.

Although some of the men recollect that their secondary schools had a girls' football team, these teams didn't receive anywhere near as much input from teachers and organisers, and their games were rarely recognised events on the school calendar. The men remembered other teams and clubs too, including male-only basketball, cricket and rugby teams, all-female netball teams, and mixed sex hockey and athletics teams, as well as mixed sex gymnastics, badminton and volleyball after school clubs. Most interesting is the men's perceptions of these other teams and clubs, including some of the following comments:

> Cricket is just boring and was done by the boring kids, and rugby was... well it's not a skilful as football is it? I mean rugby's alright, but the rugby players aren't like... not as skilful as footballers.
>
> (Daniel)

> The basketball players were just like the... you know the supposedly cool kids... the ones that smoked and smoked drugs, and went skateboarding and stuff. It's almost like a... I dunno, like a street sport... not really a proper sport.
>
> (Michael)

> None of the boys did gymnastics. It was bad enough doing just in PE.
>
> (Richard)

> I wouldn't say hockey was a man's sport, no. Our hockey team was both girls and boys, but mostly girls I think.
>
> (Sean)

Clearly, sports other than football are not held in the same regard as the beloved pursuit of these men. They are either viewed as 'not proper sports' (e.g. basketball), as sports that require far less skill or have less aesthetic qualities (e.g.

cricket and rugby), or as girls sports that men have no interest in (e.g. gymnastic and hockey). It is important to point out here that there was no homogeneity in the views of these men, but for football being the king of athletic conquests – a position that may be initiated by the structuring of the sports teams and clubs by the school itself.

'Playground Practices': Break-Times, Play and Football

Renold (1997) suggests that the playground is a highly visible arena where identities are formed and reformed, destroyed and contested. It is a space where boys and girls are able to define their own play and, concomitantly, define their own identity and 'position' in a hierarchy of peers. Harris (1998) notes that the playground has the potential to be a much more 'gender neutral' space, free from the intrusion of 'officiant' values (see Sabo and Panepinto, 1990) and, rather, policed by the children themselves. However, it remains an important site for social learning, and games and activities are frequently ritualised and play often becomes 'dis-play' as pupils act out and perform for and amongst their peers (Renold, 1997). The values and gender and masculinity imperatives that are 'learned' through other social agents (such as the family, PE curriculum, and the media) fashion subjectivities that may be transferred into this arena and, thus, the playground too is often heavily sex-segregated (Delamont, 1980; Harris, 1998).

As I recall, football was *the* activity among boys at my secondary school during break times, perhaps due to the ease with which it can be played informally in terms of venue and equipment (Sports Council for Wales, 1995: 11), but also because it was by far the most 'valued' sport among my peers. At primary school, however, footballs were banned due to too many injuries and broken windows, and other activities would therefore take centre stage. Andrew recalls a similar scenario at his primary school:

> In the playground we used to play football... we used to get a bit... erm... a bit physical, and one of the balls hit one of the teachers in the back of the head, and then they banned football in the playground... I was gutted!
>
> (Andrew)

However, neither myself nor Andrew, nor our respective peer groups, allowed such a minor inconvenience to halt play. There were always ways of getting over this hurdle including the use of a 'mini' football or even a tennis ball, or in Andrew's case 'sneaking off school grounds to the playing field next to the school'. Of course all of these tactics somewhat contest the banning of footballs for reasons of safety in that they are potentially more dangerous. Indeed, I remember all too well accidentally stepping of the measly tennis ball we were using, and hitting my head on the hard surface of the playground. This was not an isolated incident either, but was all 'part of the game', where injuries were common and the ability to play on despite the gash in your head or leg was expected of you. 'Wimping out' and especially crying would result in days of teasing and torture from your peers – perhaps an early sign of the construction of 'dangerous masculinities' (Young and White, 2000), where the endurance of pain is celebrated and even encouraged in sport (see also Sabo and Panepinto, 1990).

The way in which boys and girls construct and negotiate hegemonic masculinity in the playground and position themselves within it is principally attached to football. It is at the 'top of the playground hierarchy' in terms of both membership and space (Renold, 1997: 8). When I asked the BCUC players if they played football during break times and lunchtimes at school, I was often met with an expression that suggested the question was ludicrously unnecessary, in that to even suggest that they did not was unthinkable. The moment of silence and look of bewilderment, however, was quickly followed up by replies such as 'Oh my god, yes' (Steve) and 'it's all we ever did' (Gary). All the players resolutely stated that they would play before and after school and during every break time in between, for as long as they possibly could. Andrew even noted that he was once late for his history GCSE exam because he was playing football in the playground. Indeed, without exception, football was the only activity on the break time schedule for these men, as indicated by Sean:

> Other kids would be playing other things around us... like... I dunno, silly games like 'it' or kiss-chase... and the girls would be doing handstands against the wall and some kids would be just stood around chatting or something, but we'd like be in the middle of it all with like a massive game of football – loads of

> us. It was actually quite rough sometimes (*laughs*). Sometimes people would run across our area and just get knocked over or we'd like boot the ball at them (*laughs*).
>
> (Sean)

It is interesting that Sean refers to the playground as 'our area', as if to claim ownership of it for those who wished to play football. What is more, Sean and his friends doggedly defended their space with deliberately violent acts against those who invaded it. Harris (1998) also notes that this one activity can often dominate the playground space, and can disrupt other activities through its very presence. Moreover, Renold (1997) articulates that in the school playgrounds she observed, school policy enforced the division of playground space into 'football' and 'other', reinforcing the traditional dichotomy of powerful/powerless.

In these interviews, Sean defended his and his peers' regulation of playground space and the dominance of football by suggesting, 'Well, they could join in if they wanted to... we weren't stopping them'. What he seems oblivious to is that many girls and boys may not wish to join in such a masculinised activity and, moreover, such an exclusive activity. Indeed, the views of the majority of the men on this issue tended to reflect other research in this area (e.g. Harris, 1998; Renold, 1997), that girls and some boys were not welcome to participate:

> We didn't let girls play, and it was mostly just like a close-knit group of boys as well.
>
> (Brad)

> I don't think the girls ever asked to join in. Well, they might have done, but I...er... I don't really have a clue. [...] We might have let them play... I dunno... probably not actually (*laughs*).
>
> (Gary)

> No, we didn't let girls play. It was the thing like when you're young and that – you're like 'urgh'...
>
> (Steve)

Daniel and Michael, who throughout their interviews expressed a very different opinion of women's football to the rest of the men, noted that they would always welcome girls' participation in playground football matches, but came up against great opposition to this from other boys. Daniel noted that when girls were

begrudgingly allowed to join in, 'none of the other guys would pass to them' and that 'I did and I tried to get them involved but everyone would like shout at me for doing it, and be like "what you doing?" kind of thing'. Here, Daniel's more liberating, non-sexist behaviour threatened his own masculine status among his male peers. He did not perform the expected misogynistic and sexist behaviours that were celebrated in playground discourses among these males, and was derided as a result.

Many boys were also excluded from these playground football matches. Many of the men interviewed suggested that all boys were allowed access to the game, but whether or not they saw anything of the ball depended on their masculine status. Michael states that only certain boys were deemed worthy of acceptance:

> It was generally just the boys on the football team and a few others. Everyone else just stood around and eventually went off and did something else 'cus they never got the ball... and we probably shouted at them a lot and like took the mick a bit as well (*laughs*). [...] Some other lads joined in... like mates and people we knew well or like... erm... like the hard men... we kind of had to let them play and pass to them and stuff (*laughs*).
> (Michael)

Michael describes a similar scenario to that suggested by some of the men in PE lessons, where those who were not deemed as proficient at football were excluded from play. However, he does note that some boys that had 'status' were included, even if this status did not relate to football. It could be argued in this instance that these boys had achieved a certain position within the governing hierarchy of the playground, albeit through different negotiations to that of the football players, by following a different grain of hegemonic masculinity (as 'hard boys', 'cool boys' or 'popular boys'). Football for these boys provides an avenue for their identity to be reinforced through an association with the sport, and also through the fact that they are 'allowed' to play, setting them apart from the femininities and subordination that football practices and discourses are constructed in opposition to.

It is a further demonstration of the superior position of football in the playground that 'dominant boys' who acquired their identity by other means, 'get in on the

act' of football participation and the discourses associated with it. Indeed, all of the men interviewed reveal a football orientated play structure in their school playgrounds, where football participation delineated the dominant model of masculinity. The importance of football in young boys' lives, and its standing in the gender power nexus, in part, transpires from the media imagery that all young people (and adults) are exposed to daily.

'Becks Appeal': The Role of the Media

The influence of the sports media upon the identity of the BCUC football players cannot be underestimated. A vast amount of research points to the power of this institution in (subliminally) communicating ideologies and defining and shaping cultural identities (e.g. Craig, 1992; De Fleur, 1970; Hall, 1977; Larson, 1964; Wenner, 1998; Whannel, 1991). Within this section of the chapter I intend to explore the role of the sports media in defining the identity of the eight men I interviewed, with reference to both the printed and electronic football media.

The sports media constitute one of the prime sites for the (re)production of hegemonic masculine values and the duplication of the gender order. Coakley (1998) notes that media coverage of sport has a tendency to suggest that sport participation is appropriate for – and even expected of – boys and men, but not for girls and women. Indeed, sport is probably the most male dominated sector of the media, with the possible exception of crime reporting (Hargreaves, 1986). It has become something of a cliché to suggest that men gain greater coverage than women in this sphere – the under-representation of women athletes and women's sport teams has been reported upon to the point that it can almost be taken as read (see Harris and Clayton, 2002b; Hilliard, 1984; Messner *et* al, 1993; Pirinen, 1997; Sports Council, 1994; Woolard, 1983).

More than this, a number of studies focussing on women's sport have noted that when women are represented existing societal norms are highlighted through stereotypical portrayals (Bernstein, 2002; Clayton, 2001; Davis, 1990; Harris and Clayton, 2002b; Kane and Lenskyj, 1998; Luebke, 1989; Vande Berg and Streckfuss, 1992). Indeed, while some research has suggested that women are

increasingly gaining some visibility in the sports media by way of hallmark events such as the Olympics and Wimbledon (see Mackay, 1999; Tuggle and Owen, 1999), the content of this coverage leaves a lot to be desired.

Some of my own research has highlighted that this (mis)representation of women and the emphasis of traditional notions of femininity works as one side of a 'dual' message about sport, which suggests that men's sport is tough, rugged and desirable while women's sport is simply 'the other', or 'less than' (see Clayton, 2001; Harris and Clayton, 2002b). Such coverage may emphasise that women's sport is far less important than men's sport, but, moreover, it may also suggest that sports participation and aptitude for men is expected and even necessary in the acquisition of masculine identity.

While media coverage of women's sport may lend itself to the philosophy of exaggerated femininity, coverage of men's sport may promote characteristics associated with traditions of patriarchy, misogyny and hegemonic masculinity (Bryson, 1987, 1990; Harris and Clayton, 2002b; Messner et al, 1993; Messner, Dunbar and Hunt, 2000; Sabo and Jansen, 1998). In England, the national sport of football tends to reserve the rights to conceptualisations of masculinity. Holt (1989) suggests that many of the emotions and attitudes expressed within football accord closely to a cluster of characteristics often considered to represent 'true masculinity'. Moreover, as the country's national sport, football tends to be the most prolific pursuit of the sports media and, more often than not, this media coverage caters almost exclusively to the male gaze (Guilianotti, 1999).

Heroes and Icons

> *Stars represent typical ways of behaving, feeling and thinking in contemporary society, ways that have been socially, culturally, historically constructed.*
>
> (Dyer, 1986: 18)

As long as spectator sport has existed, stars have played a role in the process of audience building, and much sports writing has focussed upon charismatic performers (Holt *et al*, 1996). Upon asking the team members about their heroes and icons in football, none of the players were wanting for names to list. This

represented a marked difference from the collegiate women football players of Harris's (1998) ethnographic study, for whom coming up with the name of a footballing heroine proved difficult. In many cases, as noted by Harris (1998: 199-200), even naming an English women's team demanded a gruelling few moments of contemplation, often still with no fruits to bear. It is worth noting, however, that when asked who their favourite football player was, the answer was always a male player.

Harris's (1998) findings here perhaps add some credence to the contentions of some authors that men's sport is the real thing, whilst the women's games are perceived as different or inferior (e.g. Duncan, 1990; Hargreaves, 1994). The scarcity of media attention given to women's football leaves non-elite women football players, and young potentials, 'holding out for a heroine' (Harris, 1997a). This is in stark contrast to the male game. When I inquired as to where my interviewees find out about their football idols, and the events in their professional and personal lives, the replies were all fairly similar:

> Well, you can't get away from it, can you?
>
> (Andrew)

> Papers, magazine, tv... everywhere!
>
> (Brad)

> Mostly the newspaper, but footballers are like everywhere these days, aren't they?
>
> (Michael)

> Usually just in the newspaper, but footballers kind of appear all over the place, like doing interviews on tv or in magazines... like this months FHM had like loads of footy stuff – interviews with Steven Gerrard and stuff. And if you want to know more then any footballer who's anyone these days has a book out.
>
> (Sean)

Indeed, men's football has truly entered a 'post-modern' era (see Giulianotti, 1997, 1999; Whannel, 2002), characterised in part by the ubiquitous 'cashing-in' on anything football related, including the players themselves. The (post)modern football player has become a commodity, snatched up by the media and glorified by the football fan.

The respective roles of a range of (male) sports stars in contemporary culture(s) has provided the focus for much sociological scrutiny in recent years (see Altimore, 1999; Andrews and Jackson, 2001; Cashmore, 2002; Jackson, 1998a, 1998b; Trujillo, 1991; Whannel, 2002). The contemporary sports star is, or is at least portrayed as, an idealised model for one or more cultural connotation, which he/she carries with them through their efforts, achievements and failures as an athlete. In some cases the sports star fails to live up to the values of the culture he/she represents and consequently is met with media and public disbelief and ultimately condemnation and cultural disownment (see Jackson, 1998a, 1998b), or becomes embroiled in an elaborate political subterfuge to uphold the cultural ideal (see Altimore, 1999). The latter of these sports stars, along with those who publicly maintain their social eminence, continue to be celebrated as an idiosyncratic affiliate of a particular culture, and are habitually designated a 'hero'.

According to Vande Berg (1998), our word 'hero' is derived from the Greek word 'heroes', meaning a person distinguished for exceptional courage, fortitude, enterprise, superior qualities or deeds. Moreover, Arendt (1958) tells us that 'hero' was a descriptor attached to each free man who had fought in a war and whose deeds could be recounted in a story (cited in Vande Berg, 1998: 134). The sports hero of modern times may perform acts of far less significance, but in a political climate that is, arguably, more 'civilised' than it has been in the past, sport, and particularly football, may be viewed as a form of war, from which war heroes arise. The sports media may be especially accountable for associations between war and football, applying fiercely nationalistic discourse to international encounters and exploiting historical or current political and military pre-eminence (e.g. Harris, 1999; Maguire, Poulton and Possamai, 1999).

Morris (1981) notes that the warlike aspect of football and the aggression it arouses has been the subject of much debate, and playing the sport may dissipate feelings of violence and hostility in a 'harmless' way. The concept of sport as 'symbolised battle' evokes discourses of tribalism, where the athlete who scores the winning goal, makes the crucial tackle or interception, or whose athletic display epitomises the tribal ideal, is designated a hero. The sports hero

inevitably parades his qualities of strength, determination and durability in pursuit of athletic conquest, which the media promptly amplify and render as natural vigour, reproducing and instantiating hegemonic masculinity (Trujillo, 1991). Indeed, heroes, and particularly sports heroes, are constructed in an interactive process. While the athlete must have performed certain deeds to *acquire* the hero label, it is ultimately the interaction between the sportsman and the sports fan (through the media) that creates the hero (see especially, Cashmore, 2002).

It is perhaps surprising that so few of the men I interviewed made any correlation between their football idols and the football club they support. As Russell (1999) articulates, loyalty to a specific territory has long been a feature of football culture. Furthermore, some players have come to symbolise a specific local or regional culture (see Phelps, 2001), and it seems only natural, therefore, that the sportsmen adopted by children (and even adults) as 'heroes' would be representative of the football club supported.

As Russell (1999) suggests, football celebrates loyalty to a specific territory and to other men, and as Richard expresses 'disloyalty' can knock heroes and idols off their cultural pedestal quite quickly:

> The player I used to like was Rio Ferdinand (*an England international defender, now playing for Manchester United*) 'cus he obviously used to play for West Ham and in the same position as me, but when he went to Leeds that took the shine off it a bit. I still admire his skills and talents, but... well it's like Joe Cole (*an England international midfielder*) as well, when he was at West Ham, 'cus he came through the youth system and was home grown talent, but now he's gone to Chelsea I don't look up to him so much... he's not the same player really is he?
>
> (Richard)

Here, Richard places some importance upon not only the need for idols to be a player for his favourite team (and in this case also his local team), but also to be 'home grown' (born an raised in the area and, usually, progressed through the football club ranks, from trainee to first-team player). When I probed further and asked Richard the importance of being a home grown talent he replied, 'he's like one of us... just like me kind of thing, but he's made it'. By suggesting Joe Cole

had 'made it' I assume Richard means he is now living the dream of many young men (including Richard himself) by playing professional football. Joe Cole, therefore, may be confirmation that the dream is possible to achieve, symbolic of the identity these men strive to find.

Furthermore, Richard notes that he used to look up to Rio Ferdinand because he played in the same position as him (central-defence). Indeed, many of the men I interviewed drew a parallel between themselves and the players they look up to or have idolised in the past:

> I always liked – well people say I look like as well – John Barnes... it's terrible (*laughs*), but John Barnes has been my idol... watching him play for Liverpool. I see him as a similar type player to me – the same type of build. Yeah, he was my idol.
>
> (Andrew)

> I've kind of always liked Steve McManaman. He was like the best technical player when I was really getting into football. I think he's a lot like me too – he's tall and wiry and a bit of a showman on the pitch but not off it, if you know what I mean?
>
> (Brad)

> I like Roy Keane too, even though he plays for [Manchester] United (*laughs*). I'm sort of more like Roy Keane – one of those players who gets stuck in and... like gets stuck into tackles and does the simple things; just lay the ball off, keep my own game in order, sort the defence out.
>
> (Richard)

> You can't not look up to Keano (*Roy Keane*), can you? He's gotta be one of the best players in the Premiership – in the world – at the moment. He plays a lot like me, a bit of bastard on the pitch (*laughs*). He's not afraid of the hard tackle. Solid.
>
> (Sean)

There certainly seems to be a need to be able to relate in some way to the media sport stars that are held in high regard by these men. The players above relate to the footballing characteristics of their heroes; their skill, passion and determination – the traditionally masculine aesthetics of the modern game. It is interesting that both Richard and Sean identify with and, to some extent, admire the abrasive, forcible character of Roy Keane's game. Keane is certainly media-

visible as the captain of one of the world's most celebrated clubs, but also as the most prolific 'bad boy' or 'hard-man' presently playing in the Premier League. Keane is undeniably a very talented football player; he is versatile, committed to the game, skilful, and displays an awareness on the pitch that is perhaps unequalled by any other player. However, Roy Keane is also known for his hyper-aggressiveness and alleged violence both on and off the pitch, and the tabloid media has far from played-down his behaviour.

As Whannel (2002) notes, in the age of media spectacularisation and tabloidisation sport stars do not typically serve as exemplars of moral worth; rather it is the indiscretions and misdemeanours of their private lives that become the focus of headlines. Sport stars such as Roy Keane have been placed upon the front line where questions of male identity are fired at them, repelled and generally contested. The vehement and rebellious mode of masculinity in which the image of Roy Keane has been constructed commands a certain degree of fascination – as reflected by Richard and Sean's remarks – that tends to be greater than that of other professional but often dull performers (see also Whannel, 2002).

Andrew's recognition of John Barnes also interested me a great deal, particular as soon after he mentioned Ian Wright as a role model. Andrew was the only black player interviewed (and, indeed, the only black player on the team), so it may be significant that he considers two black players more noteworthy in the construction of his football identity than any of the thousands of white mediated heroes of the past or present. As I recall, at the this time in English football (early 1990's) – and at this point in Andrew's socialisation into the sport – there were still very few mediated black stars in the game, and Barnes and Wright were certainly two of the most prominent. These players, but especially Ian Wright, through their particular style of play and their 'heroic' performances representing England, have become national heroes in a way that few black athletes have been able to achieve, while retaining a sense of black identity (see especially Carrington, 2001).

The issue of national identity is an important one in the gradual, psychosomatic 'selection' of a sporting hero. While women's sport, and particularly the media

coverage it receives, may be premised on the idiolect of 'survival of the prettiest' (Etcoff, 1999; Harris and Clayton, 2002a), men's sport and media exposure for male athletes is concerned more with sporting ability and national identity (Harris and Clayton, 2002b). The importance of national identity was represented in some of the players' comments about their football idols.

Steve, for example, as the only non-Englishman interviewed, noticeably spoke of some of the more renowned football players to come out of Denmark, such as Peter Schmeichel and Michael and Brian Laudrup. He characterised all these players as 'legends' and as 'the men that kept Danish football on the map'. Steve also spoke very passionately about the Danish national side, setting them in direct opposition to the English team:

> We were certain that we were gonna beat you boys in the World Cup, which I'm still shocked that we didn't do. Tomas Sorensson had an absolute howler there! 3-0 was very, very, very flattering to you boys... ugh, it was horrible stuff!
>
> (Steve)

Steve's patriotism was clear for all to see; in fact I had a very hard time getting him off the subject of 'how lucky England were' and how the English football team 'ranks nowhere on the world stage'.

It was perhaps surprising that all but one of the English interviewees failed to mention the national side at all when talking about their football support or football heroes (although they all named English players as their role models or icons). Most of the men related such issues to English club football instead. Steve's enthusiasm for the Danish national side may be partly explained by the fact that Danish club football is not as prominent as its English equivalent:

> Brondby and Copenhagen are the big teams. I mean, all the others just follow out. I mean, sort of like Scotland with Rangers and Celtic. I follow Brondby, but most people now just follow their local teams instead... I mean, everyone's really passionate about football and that, same as here, but only really about the national side and their local club – even if they're not professional. It's like, Brondby and Copenhagen are the only teams with a chance in the Super League, and they're just crap

> compared to other teams on the European stage. It's because all our good players go and play in England I think [...] but when they do they're treated like gods... all over the newspapers and stuff... and on tv and advertising like... aftershave and shit. It's crazy!
>
> (Steve)

Taking this into account, it is perhaps 'natural' for Steve to look to Denmark's most famous exports such as Schmeichel and the Laudrup brothers as his role models, as these are the players that receive attention in the Danish media rather than those men that play in the domestic league.

The only English member of the team to allude to the England national football squad (unprompted at least) was Gary. He recalled that the 1990 World Cup was the 'first time that he really watched football', and he particularly remembered the performance(s) of David Platt, who he indicated to be his hero. Despite being a few years older than Gary, I am only able to evoke three clear images of the 1990 World Cup tournament. First and foremost, the now (in)famous tears of Paul Gascoigne after he received a yellow card in the semi-final against West Germany, signalling an end to his tournament no matter what the final score. Secondly, the momentous performance of the then virtually unknown and highly underrated Cameroon team against England in the quarter-final, in which England eventually came out on top. Thirdly, an event that made the previous two memories possible, David Platt's over-head kick against Belgium in the second round, scoring to put England through to face Cameroon in the dying moments of the match. It is this final image that sticks in Gary's mind also, and he can describe it far better than I:

> I mean, I was like just a kid, but I can remember it so well. I was watching with my dad and my sisters and we were on holiday at the time and watching in like the hotel lounge with loads of other people. We all thought that it was going to extra-time for sure, but then the cross came in and Platt hit it so sweetly... the keeper didn't have a chance. Everyone in the lounge just went nuts and, obviously, at that age I'd never seen anything like it. I couldn't sleep that night at all, just reliving that moment in my head [...] The next day my dad got some newspapers and it was just like David Platt all over every page and I... it was probably the first time I'd ever sat down and

> looked at a newspaper... just looking at the photographs of Platt and reliving it all over again, kind of thing.
>
> (Gary)

Gary's selection of David Platt as a hero or role model for his footballing future seems to be based entirely on a single exhilarating experience, evidenced by the fact that he was unable to recall any other significant moments in Platt's career. It is also evident that English national pride (of Gary and others around him) and the English newspapers had a hand in reinforcing his elevated view of the player. This makes it all the more extraordinary to me that none of the players I interviewed mentioned the England captain, David Beckham, in discussing role models and idols in the sport. For many people, and almost certainly for the English media, David Beckham is the national team and, moreover, during hallmark international tournaments, Beckham is England (see Clayton and Harris, 2002, 2003; White, 2002).

Once prompted, all of the eight players were able to talk about Beckham for some time, reliving the events and turning points of his career to this date. Moreover, many did refer to him as a 'national hero' and all (even Steve) admired and praised his football talent, with Richard going as far as to suggest that it was 'second to none'. Why then did the name David Beckham not emerge in these interviews prior to me prompting some discussion? Perhaps the answer lies in Daniel's rumination:

> D: I think he's a top bloke. I think he knows exactly what he's doing. Some people think that he's a bit thick, or whatever, but I think he's one of the cleverest blokes in football that's about at the minute. He's kind of not like other players, you know? I mean, he's a great player and that, and I'm glad he plays for England (*laughs*), but he's like from a different world to that of other players. While other players are out getting pissed or getting into scrapes, he's like doing fashion shoots and stuff.
>
> *BC: Does that matter?*
>
> D: No, not really, I think that's great. But Beckham is like... he's like a great football player and a good role model for kids and that, but he ain't like a proper player... I mean... well, you know? He's not like what you associate with football, is he?
>
> (Daniel)

It may be argued, then, that it is not simply the capabilities of player or the mediated celebrity of a player that determine a football hero. What has become apparent to me in writing this chapter is that for a media-visible footballer to become a hero in someone's eyes, that person must be able to embody the identity imperatives of that player. These imperatives may be in the form of 'race', nationality, playing style or even the private-sphere behaviours of the player in question; more than likely a combination of all of these.

Beckham, or at least the media image of Beckham, is highly complex and multifaceted (see for example Cashmore and Parker, 2003; Clayton *et al*, 2004). The media have, in the past, rendered him effeminate because of his dress sense, perceived subordination to his wife, Victoria Beckham, and for his 'clean cut' image. Thus, despite Beckham's valued football/skill related masculine characteristics, for the BCUC men, he may not be perceived as a 'safe' male role-model.

However, it is almost certainly the media, in one form or another, that communicates what the identity of football stars may be, and it is the mediated character of the professional player that is consumed by his fans; a process that is problematised by way of the media's prompt amplification of ideological traits, reproducing and instantiating hegemonic masculinity and rendering such as natural vigour (see especially Trujillo, 1991).

Summary

This chapter has a highlighted an eclectic range of influences on the men's individual footballing identities. No two stories of childhood were the same, but all shared a commonality in the palpability of gender as the prime subjective informant. As boys, the men were socialised into football, albeit by way of different socialising agents, which provided them with what Connell (1995) refers to as 'a moment of engagement' with hegemonic masculinity.

Many of the men suggested that they had a 'natural' talent and instinct for the game. But while they may have been perceived to have natural speed, strength or

hand-eye coordination (or, rather, foot-eye coordination), this does not equate to being a natural football player. Indeed, there is nothing natural about playing football. It is, I have inferred, a social institution, the product of interaction with people and social agents. Involvement in football for the BCUC players was a corollary of being a boy; the result of what Connell (1995) calls a 'collective practice' that constructs masculinity.

Within this web of identity informants, the men spoke of their relationships with family members (particularly fathers), peers, and broader social structures, such as schooling and the media, which combined to create an illusion of naturalness of boys playing football. It was here, and under this pretence, that the men's masculine/footballing identities began to develop. They found themselves in an exclusively male world, which provided a homosocial arena for an initiation into manhood. Even youth football was ritualised, misogynistic and homophobic, valuing traits of aggressive competitiveness and success. Being, or becoming, a man, for many of these players, was explicitly equated with not only playing football, but also with the accordance to the norms and values of the male athletic subculture.

It would be naïve, however, to suggest that the men's self-identity was this unproblematic. Andrew, in particular, recalls competing discourses about what it was to be a man. His footballing identity, which he developed predominantly at school, conflicted with the image of manhood advocated by his parents – where an education and financial procuribility were of importance, to be able to support his family. Masculinity, then, has a strong contextual element, and the men developed numerous, often contradictory, male identities. That is to say, while the development and expression of masculinity may be a collective practice, an individual will be occupied by more than a single set of masculinity patterns – 'multiple collectives'. In this sense, Andrew's clear rejection of many of the sexist and homophobic values of football can be explained by the conflicting, but no less patriarchal, values he learned in the family.

The next two chapters examine the men's collective practice of masculinity specifically in the BCUC football context, and map out the hegemonic patterns

valued in this particular environment. For most of the men, coming to university was their first opportunity to develop their maleness away from the influences of family members and schooling. Here, the processes of identity construction became somewhat different, turning promptly to the forging of a masculine identity as dictated by the BCUC football culture. This, I will argue, required the development of both 'direct' and 'indirect' masculinities.

# Chapter 7:

# Direct Masculinities: Football, Institution, and Men

This chapter draws on both participant observation and interview data, and aims to provide a broadly descriptive picture of the sporting and academic life-world of the BCUC football players. In doing so, it highlights the importance of structures in the production of masculinities, considering both the academic and football institutions, and the rules and expectations that shaped them, as significant providers of masculine identity. More specifically, the chapter reflects on the tangible features of collegiate football life: the rules and expectations of the university college; the rules, expectations and hierarchies of the football team, and of football itself; and the aesthetics of football play.

## Theorising Football's 'Direct' Masculinities

Masculinity at the BCUC football team was more immediately constructed around the life-world of the players. That is to say, around the men's social behaviours and identities in everyday life, particularly when together in a group. However, the organisational features, aesthetics and values of BCUC football may also contribute to a hegemonic masculinity. The aesthetics and structural characteristics of collegiate football evidence a strictly male world where ability, commitment, deference to authority, and resistance to wider structures reproduce an order of gendered power.

These attitudes and values are considered here as 'direct masculinities', referring to the everyday norms of the team as a football institution and of the men as football players: features of masculine construction that are explicitly associated with the aesthetics of football and/or the organisational, regulatory structure of the team. Because this particular football team may be considered an institution within an institution, the regulatory structure of the university college is also

considered here. Indeed, collegiate football is somewhat different to many other social institutions, even those in the realm of football. Parker (1996c) provides a rich analysis of professional Youth Training Scheme (YTS) football at 'Colby Town', for which he utilises Goffman's (1961) model of 'total institutions' as a theoretical frame to explore working relations, authority and structure at the club. For Goffman, all institutions within society maintain varying degrees of 'totality', relating to issues of officialdom, autocracy and closure (see also Parker, 1996c). While professional football may be considered low on totality in that it revolves around voluntary membership, it maintains a certain amount of closure in terms of the freedom of choice and freedom to exit once inside (ibid). Collegiate football at BCUC, however, prohibits such explicit regulatory features. It is a purely voluntary, extramural institution, founded upon pleasure, sociability and personal fitness, rather than money and career. In this sense, although it does maintain elements of seriousness and a subsequent need for deference to authority, it is not a work institution as professional football is. It is, rather, a leisure institution, which is guided predominantly by cultural values and perceptions rather than definite rules and regulations. Moreover, Goffman's (1961) theoretical frame does not provide a platform to explore gender and, more specifically, gendered power relations in institutions.

A more inclusive framework is needed, then, to explore the masculinities evident in the BCUC football team. For this, I utilise critical feminist thought and Gramsci's (1971) notion of cultural hegemony (as outlined in Chapter 2). In particular, I assume Messner's (1992) view that sport at all levels is a social institution, which, like other institutions, embodies the structure and values authorised by the hegemony of the time. In that BCUC football is a voluntary institution, any 'seriousness' or deference to authority cannot be stringently enforced and, thus, any such masculinities are reflections of dominant social values and gendered power relations – embodiments of cultural hegemony, rather than the result of enforced institutional rules and regulations. To play football at BCUC, then, is not an expression of some biological human need (see also Messner, 1992), nor is it a career move that necessarily entails some conformity to the institution's rules. It is, rather, an arena in which these men can acquire masculine status and assign themselves a location in the gender order of the wider

institution of the university college. And the regulations and the competitive values of the sport is all part of the cultural hegemony of BCUC football, and some conformity to these organisational features is, therefore, essential in the acquisition of hegemonic masculinity.

In the same way that the social side of football participation at BCUC (discussed in chapter 8) acts to socialise these men into the hegemony of the university college's football sub-culture, the organisational features also communicate ideologies and ways of behaving. Many of the aspects of the construction of direct masculinities discussed in this chapter are not rules and regulations, but are socially and historically constructed values, which invite conformity by way of the cultural, demasculinising 'risks' of non-conformity. Like any hegemonic patterns, however, there is complicity but also challenges in the form of alternative, subordinated masculinities (see Connell, 1995). Moreover, the socialising process by which the men come to embody the hegemonic form of masculinity is not always linear. Some components of the dominant form of masculinity are constructed in opposition to the values and expectations of the institution.

One of the key causal factors that make hegemonic masculinity so difficult to pin-down and define is the challenges and contradictions inherent to the concept (see for example Connell, 1990a). Central to this conceptual intricacy is the now widely employed assumption that, as well as there being multiple forms of masculinity in any particular locale, each locale is also likely to exhibit its own individual variety of hegemonic masculinity (see Brod, 1994; Connell, 1987a, 1990a, 1995, 2002; Conway-Long, 1994; Hearn and Collinson, 1994; Parker, 2001). Given this pre-disposition, central to the construction of direct masculinities is the contestation between the middle-class organisational values of Higher Education (HE) and the working-class values of football (see also Parker, 1996c; Walker, 1988; Willis, 1977).

Higher Education Expectations: Deference, Resistance and Masculine Identity

The university college football team is an institution, but, unlike professional sports teams, it is not a workplace. If it were, it may be examined by way of a more explicit set of theoretical guidelines, such as those laid down by Goffman (1961) or Habermas (1976), which lean toward an equation of masculinity with rationality and authority (see also Connell, 1995). But as an amateur, extracurricular activity, the 'work-like' routines involved in collegiate football are not so orderly or transparent. There is a hierarchy of power of sorts, but this is founded upon temporary positions where status is negotiable. For example, the president of the Athletics Union (AU) 'controls' all the sports teams at BCUC, but this position is temporary (usually one year) and, moreover, s/he is still a student and, therefore, on equal-footing when apart from the AU environment. During the 2002/03 academic year, Mac headed the AU at BCUC and my first meeting with him highlighted the non-bureaucratic, non-authoritarian structure of the football teams. Mac saw his role as an organiser and 'middleman', rather than a position of status and authority. Among his key roles, as he saw them, was organising formal functions such as the end of season presentations and the captain elect evening, and taking care of the paperwork with regard to insurance and the 'external' regulations. By this I mean the regulations regarding conduct on the pitch during league and Cup matches, which are dictated and enforced by the Southern England Student Sport Association (SESSA), rather than BCUC. Rules regarding conduct on the pitch, Mac considered 'an issue for the referee' and he simply did the necessary paperwork if a booking and fine was incurred. Paying a fine was discipline enough for any player who broke the football laws. I am not concerned with the external authorities and their regulations here, but rather with the 'internal' structure and expectations at BCUC.

Internal expectations, for the purposes of this thesis, refer to codes of behaviour expected of the football players as representatives of the university college. These codes are derived from BCUC's *Governance 6* document (G6) and the Student Handbook, which dictate the official code of conduct and academic requirements for all students at the university college. Although these are stipulated, enforced regulations governing student behaviour, I nevertheless refer to the content of

these documents as 'expectations', because these are external codes of behaviour and not directly aimed at the football players.

Viewed as hegemonic patterns and practices, these are competing ideologies, where wider middle-class institutional logic asserts standards of sophistication and tractability, whilst football logic values elitism and athletic prowess and hegemonic patterns of chauvinism, fraternity, laddism and vociferousness. Clearly these behavioural values are antagonistic and, therefore, competing for a successful claim to authority, which is all part of what is meant by hegemony. As Connell (1998) and Walker (1988) have shown, major social 'agencies' are not necessarily in harmony with each other and, as I will now go on to demonstrate, some masculinities are formed by defying the university college structure.

Soccer Against the (Educational) System

There is a clear conflict between the masculinity intentionally prescribed by the university college and that of the university college's football team. The G6 document advocated what may be described as a chivalrous academic masculinity, insisting upon, above all else, 'reasonable consideration towards others' and satisfactory academic achievement. It is an institutional logic of integrity and morality, which is communicated by the university college's authorities and reflected in its rules and regulations. These are particular dynamics of the wider institutional hegemony at BCUC, and, as Connell (1987a, 1995) stipulates, individuals take their place in the gender order in respect of these hegemonic patterns. The university college's football sub-culture cannot be isolated from this logic, because all of its members are exposed to these patterns on a daily basis. But they are also exposed to sports sub-cultural patterns, which convey hegemonic masculinity (see Bryson, 1987; Connell, 1990a, 2002; Messner, 1992, 2002), and the players are not passive recipients of either set of messages. As Messner (1992) articulates, when men enter competitive sport they are entering an organised institution of its own right, regardless of the wider context. On the one hand, the wider institutional logic of BCUC, and specifically its regulations and expectations, act as a counter-balance, which limits the production of a monolithic masculinity in the football milieu. On the other hand, football serves as an arena

where students can reject the wider institutional masculinity patterns, by establishing a claim to manhood by way of the body, rather than the mind.

This was particularly evident in the behaviours and attitudes of the players. Football, for some of the men, was an activity in which they excelled and could bask in the status that came with that excellence – a status that they did not realise in academia.

> I've never been particularly intelligent or good at anything really. Except sport, and I've always loved football. I've always done well in football and was always kind of known as a footballer at school and stuff.
>
> (Richard)

> There's always like two types of people, isn't it? Like the brainy ones who always get like A, A, A, A, like, right through school and college and stuff. And then there's the sporty ones like me who everyone in school knows and likes but do shit at work and are probably seen as a bit thick [...]. But fuck it, I know which one I'd rather be... and I am [*laughs*].
>
> (Sean)

Crucial here in the construction of masculinity is the divergent organisational structures of the education system and football. The thoroughly middle-class culture of teaching and learning values academic superiority, and high achievers are the beneficiaries of the cultural hegemony. Sean notes how he was subordinated by way of being 'seen as a bit thick', but also how he negotiated his way out of a subordinate position by making a claim to respect in the working-class culture of sport. Richard, too, suggests that status can be gained when one becomes known as a footballer, and a claim to manhood is made in this way. As Walker (1988) demonstrates, the reverse can also be true, and inner-city schoolboys often negotiate their way out of working-class masculine values by rejecting sport and establishing a claim to masculinity in academia or the arts.

Now in their late teens or early twenties, the men fully realised that a career in football was unlikely and, therefore, an education had become more important to them and their futures. Nonetheless, the dominant conceptualisation of masculinity among the footballers was constructed in opposition to the wider

institutional logic of academic achievement. At one extreme, doing well in coursework assignments and the like was, in casual dialogue at least, actively resisted. During a brief rest period at a Monday night training session, Alex made his views here quite explicit:

> Alistair: I've still gotta finish that fucking essay for Nolan [*a lecturer*].
> Alex: I ain't even fucking started, mate.
> Alistair: It's due in tomorrow, ya prick! [*laughs*].
> Alex: Yeah, but this [*training*] is more important. If Nolan thinks otherwise, he can kiss my ass. What the fuck do I need a degree for anyway [*laughs*].
> Brad: [*Mockingly*] Er, a future maybe. You twat, you're gonna get kicked out soon, mate, I'm telling ya. How many modules you failed so far?
> Alex: None. I always get assignments in. I just do 'em when I want. Still get a pass grade even if they're late, don't ya.

Central to Alex's comments here, was a need to resist the bureaucracy of higher education, and, perhaps, 'beat the system' by still gaining a pass and ultimately a degree qualification. In this way, he conforms to the traditional working-class masculinity evident in the football milieu, but also complies with the minimum requirements of the university college's regulations regarding assignments. The need for qualifications in the competitive professional world creates a situation whereby compliance to wider institutional expectations is necessary and, thus, becomes a dynamic within the hegemonic patterns of the football team. Academic success, however, remains a foil for the men in their acquisition of hegemonic masculinity. In this sense, Alex demonstrates a complicit masculinity, in that he denigrates university college policy and Higher Education (HE) as a whole and, subsequently, realises the 'manly' dividend. But he is not a 'frontline troop' for the hegemonic project, in that he is embarking upon a bachelor degree and having some success. As Connell (1995) stipulates, achieving masculine identity and status often involves extensive compromises, rather than an uncontested display of hegemonic patterns. This complicity was evident among all the players, but more commonly was less fervent than Alex's explicit verbal contempt for HE.

Systematic 'ribbing' (joking at the expense of others) of those more academically capable players was commonplace on the training pitch, in the changing rooms and during social occasions. Humour as a method of negotiating peer-group credibility is well documented (Emerson, 1970; Lyman, 1987; Parker, 1996c, 2001; Willis, 1977). The humour of male-bonding relationships may, at first sight, appear to be the antithesis of friendship building, often aggressive and frequently consisting of sexist, racist or homophobic jokes, or rhetoric that indirectly alludes to these sentiments (see also Lyman, 1987). Amongst the men on the BCUC football team, the butt of the joke was often academic capacity, but the discourse was implicitly homophobic.

> Just prior to the last match before the Christmas break, talk in the changing room centred on the coming exams. Brad unwittingly revealed that he had already begun revising (some seven weeks before the first exam). His statement was immediately met with a voluble groan of condemnation. The underlying tone of the muttering also revealed an air of typicality, as though this was not the first time Brad had exposed a certain conscientiousness toward his academic work. The protests continued: "Why don't ya just bend Ewing (*a lecturer*) over the desk and make sure of the First?", Alex exclaimed, which was met with a roar of laughter from all the lads, including Brad. "I ain't done that much. It's just 'cus I'm going away for Christmas", Brad replied in his defence. "Shit, man, I ain't gonna do nothing 'til like the week before or something", Steve muttered. "Yeah, me too. It's just 'cus Ewing's got a boner (*erect penis*) for him [*Brad*], and he don't wanna disappoint lover-boy now, does he?", Alex remarked. Everyone laughs.
>
> (Field notes, 6th Dec 2002)

Severe ribbing of this type was not just reserved for Brad. Gavin and Robert were also perceived to be intelligent and hard-working when it came to their studies, and were often referred to as 'gay', 'dick-suckers', 'butt-fuckers', 'batty-boys' and 'faggots', but none of the players were safe from implied homosexuality, directly related to perceived conscientiousness. Missing training or, even more importantly, social gatherings to stay in and work on assignments or to revise for exams were among the more serious 'crimes' against the culture of the football team. And all of the players were well aware of this:

> G: Yeah, if you don't go out on a Wednesday night or whatever, then you know you're gonna get it the next day. Steve's probably the worst for it. He can be a right... idiot sometimes [*laughs*]. It's like... 'cus I didn't go out a couple of weeks ago 'cus I had like three assignments to do, which is kind of more important, ain't it? But...
>
> *BC: How do you 'get it', as you put it?*
>
> G: He like just says you're like queer or like sleeping with the lecturer or whatever [*laughs*]. Shit, I probably shouldn't say that to you [*laughs*]. It's just stupid stuff really.
>
> (Gary)

The denigration of homosexuality is a well-documented feature of sports cultures and, particularly, 'jock' humour (see Curry, 1991; Hasbrook and Harris, 2000; Klein, 1990; Messner, 1992; Parker, 1996c). Even known heterosexual men who fail to enact the basic masculine expectations of the culture are subject to a barrage of (usually jocular) homophobic insults. The most recent and media-visible example of this vilification of suspected gayness in the football world is the bombardment of homophobic discourse aimed at former Chelsea and England defender, Grahame Le Saux. Although actually heterosexual, Le Saux was clearly 'suspect' from the perspective of the working-class masculine subculture of football, as a well spoken, intelligent art-lover who read the *Guardian* (see also Whannel, 2002). The nature of hegemony dictates that there are specific gender relations of dominance and subordination between groups of men, and the most apparent subordinated group in Western society is gay men (Connell, 1995, 2002). Gay masculinities are seen as the antithesis of archetypal maleness and, thus, homophobia is the most conspicuous and triumphant form of subordination. As the experiences of many of the football players in this case study demonstrate, one does not need to be gay to be subordinated in this way. Academic proficiency and achievement are not components of hegemonic masculinity in this milieu and are, thus, blurred with femininity and subsequently expelled from the circle of legitimacy by way of a rich vocabulary of abuse (see also Connell, 1995). In this sense, not only are individual academic achievers subordinated, but academia in general is subordinated and feminised as a middle-class vocation in a subculture governed by working-class values.

Joking and ribbing of this kind was clearly antithetical to the recipient's gender status, as well as obliging to the masculine identity of the supplier. But the ability to 'take' the barrage of insults in good humour, or to 'come back' with insults of your own, was key to accretion of masculine credibility (see also Parker, 1996c). Particularly for the academic high-achievers in the team, 'piss-taking' was viewed as an acceptable 'hazard' of being both an intellectual and a footballer:

> I'm used to the piss-takes now. You just kind of expect it after a while and laugh along with everyone else. If you don't then you just get a load more [*laughs*]. Everyone knows it's just a bit of fun, anyway. We all do it to each other and accept it back, 'cus, at the end of the day, we're all here to get a degree, not to play football. [...] We can play football anywhere and anytime, but we're all getting into loads of debt 'cus of our degrees, so we know we've got to work hard. There's, like, no second chances to go to university... probably not, anyway.
>
> (Brad)

Indeed, the hypocrisy and contradictions in the players' comments regarding academia are plain. Despite their sub-cultural attitudes towards issues of conscientiousness, all were students willingly in pursuit of HE qualifications. Away from the collective masculinity of the team, the eight men with whom I was able to secure a one-on-one interview all expressed a keenness – or at least a foreboding– to do well at university. This is summarised in the comments below:

> The academic side's gotta be more important, like. I came here to get a degree and good job. [...] I'm not gonna fuck it up by being stupid... being lazy.
>
> (Michael)

> I take my academic work very seriously, yeah. Obviously, when you're paying x-amount of money in tuition fees then you've got to get something out of it, otherwise it's just a waste of time isn't it?
>
> (Richard)

> It's what we're here for, innit? I'm not gonna waste like three years of my life. [...] It's like, I'm already thousands [*of pounds*] in debt and... I don't, like... I don't wanna be in a position where that's for nothing.
>
> (Steve)

Parker (1996c), in his case study of trainee professional football players, also observed disaffected attitudes toward education. Given the working-class culture assumed by football, such data favourably compare to existing sociological findings, which suggest that working-class youth regularly falter or disengage with the middle-class educational codes (see Willis, 1977; Walker, 1988). But, unlike the football players in Parker's (1996c) study, the vast majority of the men at BCUC did not come from working-class backgrounds and freely engaged in HE as a life-style and career choice. Thus, the reasons for the players' sentiments regarding academic success are clearly complex. Connell (1987a) stresses the importance of the structures that interrelate milieux and their historical composition. While HE and the university college as an institution assume a middle-class educational code – which rewards academic achievers – the universality of traditional working-class masculinities in football (see Giulianotti, 1999; Holt, 1989; Russell, 1999) takes precedent and establishes a successful claim to authority in this particular context. Indeed, outside of the hegemony of the football team, which is constructed and maintained by the collective values of the players, learning and scholarly success is likely to be highly valued by the individual men (see Connell, 1995). In the relative isolation of the interview room, the majority of the players noted the importance of gaining a degree and confessed to putting this first, above both football and social interaction. None were able to offer any explanation as to why, then, academic achievement was subordinated and treated as unmasculine, or even gay, in the football context. Part of what is understood by hegemony is the cultural pressure and, often subliminal, covering-up of non-hegemonic emotions and attitudes in an attempt to acquire a historically and contextually appropriate masculine identity (Connell, 1987a, 1995; Kaufman, 1994; Kimmel, 1994). In the milieu of football, the external institutional patterns of self-betterment for future occupational gains tended to be sidelined as irrelevant in, or even counter-productive to, the acquisition of 'manhood', and were, therefore, subordinated as a non-hegemonic process.

Football 'Legitimacy' Against the Codes of Conduct

Stringent codes of behaviour for the players were occasional at best, but, nevertheless, there were some expectations by the university college and the team itself regarding conduct. Institutional football etiquette, for instance, insisted

upon a strict dress code (a suit or at least shirt and tie) for all formal football evenings. These were few and far between, usually consisting just of the annual presentations and the captain-elect evening (a night where players get together for dinner and drinks, and elect the captains for the following years teams). Non-conformity in this regard was, at best, frowned upon by the AU and ridiculed by the other players, and occasionally resulted in refusal of entry. In most cases, however, codes of behaviour stipulated by the football teams were culturally constructed and the antithesis of those of the wider institution. These sub-cultural hegemonic values, such as fighting, disorderly conduct and sexism, are considered for the purposes of this study as social behaviours, or 'unofficial norms' (Parker, 1996c, 2001) rather than derived from organisational structure and are, therefore, discussed in the next chapter. But, it is worth noting here that these socially constructed codes of behaviour are in direct contravention of BCUC's G6 regulations regarding behaviour towards others.

Most notably, the wider institutional code of conduct stated that:

- 'Students should always act with reasonable consideration towards others'
- 'Students shall not commit or threaten to commit any action which may lead to injury to themselves or to any other person'
- 'Students shall not commit any act of sexual harassment i.e. the making of advances or approaches or innuendoes of a sexual nature to the point at which their behaviour might reasonably cause alarm or distress to the person(s) to whom such approaches, advances or innuendoes have been made'

These explicit regulations of BCUC were aimed at all students, including the football players when they were representing the University College. But, while these and all of the institution's rules and regulations were stringently enforced in day-to-day operations, the collective disregard for them in the football sub-culture went seemingly unnoticed and certainly unpunished. I approached the team captain, Daniel, in the interview to find out his thoughts on the matter:

> D: I guess it's all kind of relative, isn't it? I mean, I didn't even know about those rules... the ones you just said, and I really

doubt that any of the lads have read them either [*laughs*], but they're kind of obvious, aren't they? I mean, it kind of goes without saying, generally speaking, that that's how people should behave and, like, conduct themselves. But, you know, football's different, isn't it? It's competitive and a bit of aggression is bound to happen. But in sport that's acceptable... and if it isn't acceptable then the ref will do something about it.

*BC: But do you think that certain conduct on the pitch will reflect badly on the university? And does that bother you?*

D: Yeah, definitely. If it goes too far and, like, a full-on fight kicks off or whatever. But that's never happened and I wouldn't let it happen. It's mostly all talk really.

*BC: What about sexual harassment? Do you think some of the lads might be in contravention of that rule down at the Union or anywhere else?*

D: No. I mean, I know we can be a bit raucous and probably a bit sexist at times, but they're all good lads and wouldn't go too far with it or nothing. It's just a bit of fun, like... just having a laugh or trying to pull [*women*] or whatever. It's not sexual harassment or anything... it's just part of what we do [*laughs*]. I know that's gonna sound awful when you write this up, but you know what I mean. [...] If any of the lads went too far... or if, like, I felt they went too far, then I'd be the first one to say something. You know, I've got a younger sister and that, so I'd be the first to step-in if anything like that went on.

Charges of sexual harassment are, of course, very serious, but subject to individual perspectives in that one person's notion of what is and is not sexual harassment may differ from another's. I am not suggesting that any of the players I observed were intentionally in breach of BCUC's policy in this regard, although sexist and sexually explicit dialogue, and innuendo, were commonplace when talking about and to women (see Chapter 8). Moreover, verbal aggression, threats of violence, and discourteous behaviour towards opposing team players were a frequent feature of match-day encounters. Crucial to Daniel's defence of the alleged breaking of the university college's code of conduct is the notion that it is all part of football culture. That is to say, the kind of behaviour that, by Daniel's own admission, is generally unacceptable, is considered in the football milieu as 'just part of what we do'.

This is consistent with much of the existing literature about the hegemonic masculinity found to preside over male sport. Whitson (1990), for example, suggests that male sport ritualises aggression and allows it to be linked with competitive achievement. As such, sport is one of the few remaining social arenas where aggression is 'officially legitimate'. Other writers purport that modern, competitive sport was in fact built upon a foundation of aggression and violence (e.g. Dunning, 1999; Elias, 1971), and such values have remained legitimate under the protective umbrella of competitive athleticism (see also Cashmore, 2000). Behaviour that is unacceptable, or even illegal, in most social settings is often legitimised and excused 'on the pitch'. Physical violence, verbal abuse ('sketching') and spitting are all familiar examples of antisocial behaviour that is sanctioned and even considered necessary by coaches, players, and supporters in competitive sport. Walk (2000) has also pointed to the compulsory sexualisation and sexual harassment of women that has 'invaded' male sports culture. Behaviour of this kind has come to be implicitly linked with the acquisition of masculinity, and men that resist this code are in danger of being demasculinised and subordinated (see also Bruce, 2000; Curry, 1991). While much of these existing research findings are confined to American sport, the hegemonic masculinity implied here is by no means exclusive to that side of the Atlantic. England's national pastime of football, as Giulianotti (1999: 154-5) attests, is 'uniformly aggressive and humourlessly chauvinistic'. Football's playing aesthetics preach a traditional, aggressive masculinity, and the sub-culture is dominated by the pursuit of women for sexual conquest (ibid: 155).

The BCUC players' resistance to the wider institution's code of conduct was legitimised under football's hegemonic patterns. Outside of the University College's football subculture, Daniel agrees, these codes of conduct are legitimate and should be adhered to. But these regulations are not applicable to the football players as a collective, because the traditional working-class masculine values take precedence. Here, middle-class, 'civilised' behavioural codes are subordinated in a milieu of wholly 'necessary' aggression, figurative and physical violence (see for example Whitson, 1990) and sub-culturally admired sexualisation and chauvinism. In respect of the latter, however, the players may only embody complicity to the football hegemony because, as Daniel steadfastly

articulates, 'going too far' is not the intention of the men and certainly is not admired. While the precise meaning of 'going too far' is not absolutely clear, one can assume that sexual violence or causing deliberate distress to women would fall into this category. Moreover, not all of the men were 'sexual predators' and many had long-term girlfriends and, thus, no longer pursued other women. In this sense, the men drew on the patriarchal dividend, asserting their dominance of women by way of explicitly sexualised language, observable heterosexuality and the like, but, to my knowledge, were never violent or forcefully dominant. Masculinities that are constructed in this way are complicit, rather than hegemonic (see Connell, 1995).

Patterns of hegemony, however, whether hegemonic or complicit, are not automatic and do not necessarily secure total control. The football hegemony suggests that aggression and violence are acceptable or 'legal' as a gesture of sporting prowess. But this is not to say that levels of sporting prowess, which may be a prelude to aggression and violence, cannot be to high. As Daniel noted, the aggressive nature of the football subculture at BCUC has the potential to go too far, risking discrediting the team or the university college as a whole. Acknowledgement of this by the team captain demonstrates some resistance to football's hegemonic masculinity – or at least the potential for resistance (see also Messner, 1992).

Football, Hierarchy and Subordination: Aesthetics, Authority and Masculine Identity

As I have already noted, there was little in the way of 'formal' hierarchy or authority in the BCUC football team. The players were notionally of equal status. The captain and the players were 'officially' answerable to the AU president, in as much as external authorities were voiced through him. The players were also 'unofficially' answerable to the team captain and the coach. This was a slightly more complex relationship. The captain acted as a player/manager and was therefore responsible for team selection and tactics. The coach was freelance and trained all of the university college's five teams in any manner he saw fit, but had no say in team selection and tactics. As such, both captain and coach held positions of authority of a kind, but it was not a stringent authority that could be

defended by way of reprimands (even non-selection for the next game was unlikely due to limited 'good-quality' players). It was, rather, an authority (and a patent authoritarianism) built on respect and a trust in their age, experience, knowledge, methods and instruction. The 'aesthetics' of football, however, have a way of constructing a hierarchy in themselves, founded on such hegemonic values as vociferousness, deference to authority, playing ability and commitment to the cause. Very few writers have contributed to an understanding of the aesthetics of football. Exceptionally, Giulianotti (1999) considers 'football play', examining playing styles and techniques, tactics and, importantly, the 'warrior' metaphors that shroud these aspects of the game. In this latter respect, Morris (1981) also contributes to the body of knowledge, providing a colourful and interesting image of football as something tribal and instinctive. Giulianotti, however, fails to articulate any relationship between football aesthetics and masculinity and, while Morris implies the existence of a certain machismo, he lacks a credible exploratory frame and his stance may be considered the antithesis of that of a pro-feminist.

Playing Style

From its earliest moments, football has proved a potent vehicle for the figuration of manliness. At its origin, physical violence was commonplace (see for example Elias and Dunning, 1972). This has continued throughout history and into the modern day game to enshrine a form of toughness and insolence that stoutly resists the 'feminisation' of society. Playing style was all part of an image construction process for the men at BCUC, claiming as their own a particular facet of football machismo. Pace, flair, 'hardness', intimidation tactics and a 'solid' cool-headedness were all highly valued attributes, which went some way to shape each player's masculine identity. Rarely, however, can a footballer demonstrate all of these abilities, and so the players laid claim to one or two, and determinedly promoted these assets in establishing the 'type of player' they were.

> I'm quick and powerful, and I've got a lot of technical ability, I'd say. [...] [That's] definitely important in football. It's those type of players – players like me, with a bit of flair, kind of thing – that win games and also get the recognition, I'd say.
>
> (Andrew)

> [Steve McManaman] was like the best technical player when I was really getting into football. I think he's a lot like me too – he's tall and wiry and a bit of a showman on the pitch but not off it [...].
>
> (Brad)

> I'm sort of more like Roy Keane – one of those players who gets stuck in and... like gets stuck into tackles and does the simple things; just lay the ball off, keep my own game in order, sort the defence out.
>
> (Richard)

> [I'm] a bit of bastard on the pitch [*laughs*]. [I'm] not afraid of the hard tackle. Solid.
>
> (Sean)

> Well it's [*football*] a tough game. And you've got to play tough, go in hard for the tackles, rough 'em [*opposing players*] up a bit. Just fucking get stuck in. That's how I play, anyway. [...] It don't matter how big they are or how quick or how skilful – if you show 'em that you ain't fucking around right from kick-off then they're scared shitless the whole game and can't play.
>
> (Steve)

At the risk of indicating boundaries where none may exist, one can construct two typologies here: the 'skilful' player, who relies upon speed, positional awareness and an ability to take the ball around players; and the 'hard' player, who holds in his arsenal physicality and courage in the tackle, with little regard for the consequences. Many of the players embodied both of these styles, depending upon what the situation called for, but tended to relate to and construct an image around just one typology. And, as noted in Chapter 6, this image was often an attempt to 'live up to' their football heroes and embody the same masculine guise that the sports media promotes.

Both styles typify the hegemonic masculinity evident in the playing aesthetics of football, because both are concerned with 'beating' the opposition player in a figurative battle, which acquires a certain superior masculine identity. However, the everyday dialogue between the men on the training pitch revealed the cultural subordination of the 'skilful' player. As Gavin skipped gracefully around Sean

and then Alex before tucking the ball into the bottom left-hand corner of the goal, the jeers were soon heard:

> Coach: Oh, it's a crowd pleaser!
> Sean: I can't be dealing with this fairy shit.
> Gavin: [*with a huge grin*] I beat you, didn't I? If you can't keep up, that's your problem [*starts to dance on the spot*].
> Sean: Yeah, yeah, you fucking fairy.

And, later, Tom made a similar run up the right wing, taking the ball around several players as he went:

> Alistair: Oh, 'ere he goes, look!
> Alex: Fucking twinkle-toes!
> [*Everyone laughs*]
> Alistair: Someone take 'is bandy fucking legs away, would they? [*Someone does*] Yes! Good tackle!

In actual fact, it was a terrible tackle: a full-blooded slide that raised the potential of injury to both players, but it was undeniably courageous (especially when considering it was on an Astroturf surface) and, as such, warranted the praise and applause of all the other players and the coach. Skilfulness, it seemed, was seen as something effeminate and, thus, invited subordinating labels such as 'fairy' and 'twinkle-toes'. These were not isolated occurrences and there was a rich and varied emasculating vocabulary at hand to describe this style of play. Indeed, Tom was better known to some of players as 'Grace', alluding to his 'graceful' playing style. In itself, the acquisition of a woman's name as an alias is a process of emasculation and, therefore, subordination pertaining to the hegemonic masculinity of the team. To suggest that these hegemonic patterns dictated a 'hard' playing style, rather than a 'skilful' one, however, would be an oversimplification of a very complex configuration of masculinities.

A 'skilful' style of play has long been associated with the modern 'heroes' of football, such as George Best, Pele, and Zinedine Zindane. These players have not been deemed unmasculine or effeminate for their playing style. They are, rather, in football at least, the 'ultimate' men that all other men strive to emulate. As Andrew rightly noted (above), 'it's those type of players [...] that win games

and also get the recognition'. There appears, then, to be some differentiation here between the hegemonic patterns of the BCUC football team and the wider football institution. This may be explained by the absence of fame and the media spotlight in collegiate football, whereby being a 'crowd pleaser' is deemed less important due to the limited audience. But for a more convoluted explanation, it is necessary to more closely examine the subculture of the football team and, specifically, the masculine imperatives of football play as a whole. Above all else, competitive sport is concerned with beating the opposition teams and players and, in this sense, to (successfully) demonstrate a 'skilful' style of play must be to embody a complicit form of masculinity. At BCUC, it does not appear to be the idealised style of play, but, nonetheless, contributes to, and realises the same underlying patterns of, a display of male authority and power.

This evidences a clear contradiction. A 'skilful' player embodies complicit masculinities, but in the familiar discourse of the training-ground, these masculinities are subordinated. Such data signals an element of danger in drawing strict boundaries between Connell's (1995) forms of masculinity and treating each of them as a fixed character type. Indeed, while 'skilful' play was subordinated in the context of training, where individual masculinities became of importance, the collective masculinity of the team authorised such a style of play on match-day.

Crucial to masculine football identity, then, was a hard-working attitude, a will to win and, above all, the 'tools' and ability to contribute to the team's need for victory, in whatever form these tools presented themselves. Viewed as a collective process, the team's hegemonic masculinity could only be realised by way of both 'skilful' and 'hard' individual playing styles. But as a process of individual identity construction, 'hard' players epitomised the form of masculinity favoured by the team. It was these players (such as Alex, Alistair, Steve and Sean) that were more vocal during training sessions and on the pitch, and commanded a greater respect from other players. Their position at the top of the player hierarchy was secured by way of the perception (of other players) that they exemplified the team's hegemonic masculinity, and was evidenced by the

minimal 'ribbing' and 'back-chat' that these players received. The 'hard' image was one that these players were very keen to promote:

> It's a man's game, isn't it? I know that sounds a bit sexist, like, but it really is. [...] There's a definite need for solid... like, hard-tackling players. It's nothing personal, like, but I shout and swear at everyone and get stuck in, and sometimes give a bit of a shove or a jab in the ribs if it needs it. It's all part of the game... and a good part, as well. Like, if you can't beat a team, or the guy you're marking is too quick or too skilful for ya, then I make sure I break them down real early on... give 'em something to think about, like. [...] Sometimes you've got to do it in training too, to toughen the lads up a bit. Nothing personal, kind of thing... they're all my mates and they're good players, but you can't win a game just with all that fairy shit.
>
> (Sean)

> We've got some fairly hard-tacklers, but most of the midfield... if we play like three-five-two or three-four-three (*formations of player positions e.g. three defenders, five midfield players and two centre forwards*) or whatever, then I have to hold them, like in the holding role, and like just bring down the midfield players. Because, all the other players in front of me, they don't really play to defend... like Rich, Gary, Tom and all that, and Brad as well, their only mind is attacking and they don't defend, don't get stuck-in. Good attacking players, but they should have just a bit more of an eye on the rough stuff as well. [...] You've got to go in for the harsh ones and that's it, because that's the only thing they [*opposing players*] understand, kind of thing. If you see Keano [*Roy Keane*] in a match, he goes in and maybe punches a guy in the kidneys or whatever. That's football how it should be played! [...] I think it's [*the team*] a nice mix to be honest. It's nice to see. It's a nice mix between skilful players, and still the hard-men as well. There's always going to be hard men in the game. It's phased out slowly, which I don't think is a good idea... it's becoming all European... like Italian or Spain and that, and a bit girly, like.
>
> (Steve)

The importance of the 'skilful' players is acknowledged here in these comments, but, more resolutely, as a 'man's game', this is outweighed by the need for 'hardness' and intimidation. These were sentiments encouraged by both the coach and the team captain, Daniel, with phrases like 'get stuck in', 'take him out' and 'bring him down' frequenting the training field and during official games. Such language implies an insertion of aggressiveness and violence to the play, which

was treated by all the players as 'part of the game'. But, as with the breaking of codes of conduct, discussed earlier, this behaviour could go too far:

> Yeah, I shout at the lads from the touchline, kind of thing, and tell 'em to get stuck in or whatever. And it's ok when they bring someone down, cus that's just part of the game. But if they get booked or sent off, or injure some guy, or injure themselves, then that ain't on. [...] Dirty play is one thing, but... like... going in deliberately to injure someone... no.
>
> (Daniel)

> It's never anything personal, like, and you don't want to injure these guys. I'd never intentionally do that. That's just wrong and there's no place for it in football, in my opinion.
>
> (Sean)

> [David Beckham], against Deportivo (*a Spanish club side*), when Tristan (*a Deportivo player and Argentinian international*) dived in on him, and then in the next game, Duscher... disgraceful tackles! Straight red-cards (*sendings off*) in my book. Horrible. Disgraceful behaviour!
>
> (Steve)

This corresponds to Messner's (1992) findings with regard to aggression and violence in sport. Males often view aggression and violence, within the rule-bound structure of sport, as legitimate and 'natural' (Bredemeier and Shields, 1986; Duquin, 1984), and even some 'stretching' of the rules in order to gain some sort of advantage is viewed as acceptable (Messner, 1992). But most have respect, and even reverence, for the importance of rules as a code of conduct that places safe boundaries around their aggression and their relationships with others. 'Hardness', then, was seen as legitimate and even natural for the BCUC men in the football milieu, and was revered as the epitome of hegemonic football patterns. But violence too far removed from the rules and regulations, to the point that it posed a threat to the well being of themselves or other individuals, was viewed with contempt and demasculinised as an 'un-sportsmanlike' act. In such instances the football hegemony disrupts itself, where hegemonic patterns go to extremes and risk discrediting the structure of male power and authority in sport (see Connell, 1995).

The Importance of Winning

Regardless of playing style and the social image that went with it, crucial to the acquisition of hegemonic masculinity was commitment, hard work, enthusiasm and a potent will to win. When Wednesday afternoon came around, and the team was poised for kick-off, the jocularity and cultural tussle for individual, positional masculine status that enveloped the training ground, Students Union and changing room was put aside, and a 'collective' team masculine status came to the fore.

> Today was an important cup match. In the changing room, this fact wasn't apparent. The conversation was as jovial and inane as ever, with Cristina Aguilara's breasts the main topic of discussion. [...] But as the lads finished tying their bootlaces and tapeing their socks, readying to deploy onto the pitch, a sombre quiet befell the room. There was no team-talk from Daniel. The lads knew what they had to do – win! [...] Steve had become a good informant and we got along very well. As he strolled onto the pitch, I went to grab a word and wish him luck, but he strode right by, without so much as a glance. The other lads too were focussed and looking more serious than I had ever seen them before. I stayed away from the huddle as Daniel provided some last-minute instructions. The huddle soon broke to a roar of encouragement from the 'BCUC faithful' and the players made themselves heard too, with a strong 'must-win' message echoing around the pitch. 'Let's get stuck in right from the whistle', 'come on Bucks, we can win this easy', 'this is our game, lads'.
>
> (Field notes, 17th Feb 2003)

As Messner (1992) articulates, sporting masculinities are regularly organised around the 'Lombardian ethic' of "winning isn't everything; it's the only thing" (supposedly uttered by American Football coach, Vince Lombardi – see ibid: 45). This was certainly the attitude of most of the football players in this case study. When I posed the question, 'how important is winning to you', I was frequently met with a look of disbelief that I had even bothered to ask:

> I expect every one of them to go out for the win. If they win, I win, and if they lose, I lose. I didn't get into football, or any sport, not to win.
>
> (Daniel)

> I always try to win. Second place is the first loser.
>
> (Richard)

> I don't play anything not to win. That's it. I can't imagine playing anything not to win. It's just part of life – you've gotta win! You can't just go around saying 'ah, yeah, I'm easy' – no way, not in my book! I don't wanna play in the same team as people who don't give one hundred per cent. That's where my temper comes from a bit, because I just want to win!
>
> (Steve)

Although the importance of the win, in the broader scheme of things, varied from player to player, central to each of their masculine identities was an enthusiasm and stoic commitment to the collective goals of the team. Winning was a hegemonic masculine requirement, and all the players had been socialised into this competitive sport ethic many years before coming to BCUC. Team captain, Daniel's, words (above), however, are testimony to the persistence of this message in many male sporting institutions.

In that the identity of each of the players cannot be separated from the collective identity of the team, winning and a good performance were also crucial to the individual men's self-perceptions of their masculine status. The BCUC football institution was extremely hierarchical in this sense, with the highest value placed upon being the best or giving the best performance. A good performance would earn praise from the captain and the other players and, more tangibly, the distinction of 'man-of-the-match' and a few free drinks that evening. Poor performances, on the other hand, would often be met with ridicule and the less coveted, 'dick-of-the-day' label. The ritual 'piss-taking' that would transpire after a poor performance was expected to be taken in good humour and, as Daniel told me, would 'motivate [the player] to perform better next time'. The dynamics of hegemony favour those who best exemplify and legitimise the claim to power and authority, which in this case was built on an image of being the best football team in the league. Poor individual performances, therefore, posed a threat to this 'collective' hegemonic position, and were subsequently subordinated by way of mockery and castigation. Furthermore, the poor performance itself, as well as the ensuing ridicule from peers, impacts considerably on the self-worth of the player in question.

> Playing well – better than anyone else – and helping to win is definitely the main aim, and it makes you look good afterwards! It's like, on my birthday, we played this shocking team in London. We were up 1-0 after, like, thirty seconds, but then I gave away the ball twice and we lost 2-1, and I was like... I was gutted! They were a shocking team and we still lost, and it was my fault. [...] It was a horrible match... everything went wrong! You just don't really feel like anything afterwards.
>
> (Steve)

It was this conscious striving for athletic success – for masculine self-worth – that was the primary means by which many of these men defined themselves. Failure was not only unacceptable to the team, but also to the individual man. Masculine identity was not just achieved by being a member of the team, being out there playing alongside and against other men – the dynamics of hegemonic masculinity and the competitive structure of football, even at this amateur, collegiate level thwarts such a position. Rather, self-worth, coming about through masculine identity, was achieved by being better than other men – this was the key to acceptance in the collegiate football milieu. Here, a clear affinity was evident between the globalised structure of football as a competitive, hierarchical institution and the development of masculinities at BCUC (see also Messner, 1992).

Compulsory Deference: The Coach, the Captain and Authority

Self-worth amongst athletes is, to some extent, a psychological process and, thus, not considered within the bounds of this study. But it is important not to underestimate the socialising aspects implicated in this process. That is to say, the relationship between success/defeat and player self-esteem is subjectively internal, but this may be the product of external/social influences, and, specifically, the dovetailing of achievement in football and masculine identity. One need only read the British tabloid newspapers' vacillating commentary on the English national team to evidence this process (see especially Harris, 1999). The football media might not be the only site where this ideological message is imparted – though it is, perhaps, the most influential in that it is likely to, in turn, inform other socialising agencies. Such messages may also be conveyed by the crowd (see Giulianotti, 1999), by coercive fathers (see chapter 8; see also Pearce, 2000), and by coaches and managers (see Wagg, 1984).

The recent history of sport has witnessed significant advancements in the 'theory of coaching' and, particularly, in motivational theories. Parker (1996c: 73) cites the 1939 'Football Association Coaching Manual' as a retrospectively flawed guide to motivating players with 'a weakness of moral fibre', which prescribes a 'really sharp word' as the paramount solution. More recent texts about coaching stipulate an altogether more positive, broadly democratic style, warning that the 'old-school', autocratic approach 'increases athletes' fear of failure, lowers their self-esteem, and destroys [the coaches] credibility' (Martens, 1990: 28; see also Lyle, 2002). Despite these conceptual submissions, however, the world of professional football management and coaching has tended to retain a method of strict behaviour management and verbal authoritarianism (see Parker, 1996c; Wagg, 1984; see also Batty, 2001; Lovejoy, 1998; Pearce, 2000).

The men at BCUC enjoyed a far more egalitarian, relaxed relationship with the coach and captain (who fulfilled the manager's role) than those often described within the professional locale. This may be because Daniel was a friend and peer to all of the players and his position as 'manager' of an amateur, collegiate team allowed him no greater or lesser investment in team performance/success than the players themselves. The coach, too, was free-lance and was employed purely to put all five of BCUC's teams through their paces on a Monday night, with no personal or professional interest in the ultimate performance of each team on a Wednesday afternoon. To put it another way, neither captain nor coach had any 'formal' authority over the players. This is not to say, however, that verbal authoritarianism and, particularly, demasculinising castigation was entirely absent in coach/player and captain/player interaction. And while these relationships tended to be egalitarian and democratic, they were nonetheless constructed on an ethos of hierarchical masculine identities – a gender order – where coach and captain occupied the highest positions. Indeed, crucial to the hegemonic masculinity of the team was the 'compulsory deference' to the authority of these two men.

> Well, at the end of the day, he's [*the captain*] a figurehead, isn't he? He's in charge, so you have to respect him for his decisions,

> let him get on with it, and if you don't agree with it, then... tough shit, basically. I mean, he's there to do a job, and he's doing it 'cus he was the... well, was kind of seen to be the best man for that job.
>
> (Richard)

Despite being a university peer, and 'equal' in that sense, and the managerial role being only temporary (one season), Daniel was afforded status, by the players, in the football subculture because he was seen as, and democratically voted in as, the 'best man for the job'. The very term, 'best man', implies an air of masculinity, in that the gender order is constructed by way of the perceived value and importance of particular traits (see for example Connell, 2002). Football's explicit, institutional hegemonic masculinity, as I have already indicated, is concerned with winning and 'beating' other men. Knowledge and experience of football, here, and, perhaps more importantly, the recognition of that knowledge and experience by others, is complicit to this composition of masculinity and, thus, secured Daniel's position as a masculine figurehead. Daniel, himself, made this point clear:

> D: All of us, everyone involved in football here, has the same goal. We all want to win and will do whatever we can to do that. The people that were in the same team as me last year were there when we voted for who should be captain [...], so obviously the people that voted... if they voted for me it was because they thought I could do it, so therefore you would expect them to listen to you and respect you because they voted for you. [...] And even the first years, or just those that are playing football for the university for the first time... even though they don't really know you or nothing, they listen to you too, 'cus... you know, if you know somebody's used to it and knows what's going on in the leagues and that and has met some of these teams before, then you tend to listen to them.
>
> *BC: What can you do – or do you do – if they don't listen, or you think they're not respecting you?*
>
> D: Well, most of them do listen, 'cus they know me and know I'm just trying to help them. I can't take it when people don't do their best for the uni. It's just annoying when you see a game and think 'they're not even trying, we're not even in this'. [...] Like I've said to them many a time, 'you're not letting me down if you lose... it bothers me, but it's not me. You're letting yourself down'. So, you know – I mean, you've seen it yourself – I do stand on the sideline and rant and rave and swear and

> shout a bit, but if some of the guys don't respect that or listen to what I say, then everyone else like gives them shit as well, 'cus the majority know that I'm trying to get the best out of them and respect and kind of acknowledge that.
>
> (Daniel)

Given the 'Lombardian ethic' prominent in football's hegemonic masculinity, the acquisition of masculine identity necessitated deference to Daniel's authority. Players that did not adhere to this philosophy were 'given shit' (rebuked and mocked) and, thus, subordinated and positioned lower down the team's gender order by their peers. Similar patterns of 'compulsory deference' were evident in the coach/player relationship.

> Well, that's football, ain't it? The coach says jump and you do it. That's what you're expected to do and, personally, that's what I want to do. I wouldn't do it if I didn't. It clearly makes you a better player, 'cus he's a good... our coach is a good coach. You've gotta be a bit fucking stupid really not to listen to him, don't ya think?
>
> (Sean)

> The coach is only there to get the best out of you, like. I mean, he works you very, very hard, but that's good. That's what we want... it's what we need if we're gonna win the league this season. [...] Some of the lads piss about a bit and, like, call him a twat or cunt... sorry [*laughs*]... or whatever, you know, behind his back and very quietly, like. But, at the end of the day, they're the ones that are twats and are, like.... they're, like gonna suffer for it on Wednesday, or at some point in the season, for not doing it... doing what he asks and stuff.
>
> (Steve)

Deference to the authority of the coach was also part of a process of image construction for the players. Football's hegemonic patterns dictated that winning and/or 'being the best' was pivotal, and conformity to this philosophy, by way of deference to those who 'knew best', for example, was therefore considered masculine. The free-lance coach, Jay, had worked previously with one of London's Premiership clubs and, as such, his credentials, and, therefore, his authoritative position and culturally-bound masculine status, went largely unquestioned by the players. Even when it was questioned, as Steve (above) suggested it was on occasion, it was done clandestinely, so as not to incur the subordinating banter of coach or peers.

Jay's only contact with the team was during training sessions on a Monday night. Jay had no influence when it came to team selection or tactics (though he would often work on 'set-plays' (pre-learned, tactical manoeuvres that could then be used in a match situation) as stipulated by and at the request of Daniel). Instead, he was employed to put the players through their paces and hone their skills, irrespective of the following Wednesday's game plan and team-list. Jay's contribution, then, was an investment in individuals (e.g. improving them as football players and improving their fitness levels) rather than an investment in the team and the University College's broad ambition of athletic success – though the two are not entirely unconnected. Training sessions and the work-like routines involved in them were pre-arranged and standardised, with minimal interference from the team captain. As Jay himself told me at the end of one such session:

> I just give 'em a workout and provide 'em with a basis of routines, which are aimed at making 'em into better players. They can do what I ask and do the routines or they can fuck off or not come at all – it makes no difference to me. What I won't have, but, is them fucking around and messing up the rest of the lad's advancement, or them sitting around not doing as they're asked. It's not up to me if they do or don't come to training, but if they're here, they work... and that fucking includes you as well, sunshine [*laughs*]! You don't get no special treatment from me!

Indeed, I neither asked for nor received 'special treatment'. In fact, I had already attended training sessions for almost a year before Jay became aware that I was present in a research capacity. As such, unlike my 'outsider' understanding of Daniel's managerial authority, I experienced the 'rigours' of training and Jay as a figure of authority first-hand.

As already discussed, deference to authority was viewed as a compulsory, hegemonic practice, intrinsically linked to the 'Lombardian ethic' pertaining to the importance of winning. This compares favourably to existing literature about masculinity and conformity and control, where coaches exercised astounding amounts of personal control over athletes, simply through what Crosset (1986)

calls the 'promise of grandeur' (see also Sabo and Panepinto, 1990). So, at a macro level, despite the absence of 'totality' and 'closure' evidenced in the professional locale (see for example Parker, 1996c), the collegiate football players were willing to submit to 'unofficial' authority and authoritarianism because of the possibilities regarding that most hegemonic masculine of all sporting traits – success. At a micro level, authority and authoritarianism manifested itself in a number of ways.

Unlike the professional milieu, neither coach nor captain had the power to dictate external life-style patterns. Their power was, rather, contextually bound: the coach claiming a position of authority in the training context, and the captain in the pre-match, the match, and (to a much lesser extent) the training contexts. Even here, there was not the level of autocracy portended by Parker (1996c) in the professional trainee realm, where stringently authoritarian methods of motivation led to strong 'feelings of resentment towards their coach on account of the daily personal humiliation they, and others, suffered' (ibid: 81). At BCUC, such feelings were rare and usually fleeting (for a brief moment after receiving admonishment, for example). Indeed, personal verbal attacks were rare and, when given, tended to have an air of jocularity about them, frequently (though not always) closing with a smile and/or a laugh from both parties.

The customary manifestation of Jay and Daniel's contextual power was animated and vociferous instruction. Shouting was a common occurrence at training sessions and on match days, but was generally affiliated with encouragement, rather than castigation and ridicule. Where the latter expression of power did transpire, it was often targeted at the group as a whole, rather than an individual player, and always incorporated some constructive criticism and instruction for improvement:

> Daniel: You're playing shit! Fucking close 'em down earlier! Look at ya, you're all backed up on the 18-yard line, scared of the fucking ball! Fucking come on!

And such match-day rebuke was regularly followed by equally vociferous praise and commendation:

> Daniel: Well played! That's better! Now keep fucking doing that. Push forward! Forward! Push up! That's it. Keep it up, Bucks!

Daniel's self-confessed approach to sideline management of 'shouting, screaming, going mad all the time', which he claimed to have reproduced from his managerial idols, John Gregory, Peter Reid and Graeme Souness, may be seen to capitalise on the competitive machismo of the players, inflaming aggression and compliance, by creating the perception of player subordination/low worth, with oral stridency (see also Sabo and Panepinto, 1990). Moreover, being heard and trouncing other voices in the milieu may symbolise a masculine positional identity and legitimise his claim to authority. But, in contrast to existing findings about coach/athlete power relationships, Daniel's motivational shouting never entailed ridicule – homophobic, misogynistic or otherwise (see especially Sabo and Panepinto). Castigation of this kind was usually reserved for the opposing team players and, on occasion, for the referee, where it correlated to the hegemonic aggressive, intimidating style of play discussed earlier. Here, public humiliation of opposing players was used to incite a better performance from the BCUC team, as well being a direct, demasculinising attack on the player concerned.

Shouting was a common action on the training ground also. The coach, Jay, vociferously encouraged hard work from all of the players, constantly barking orders and publicly pointing out faults. If a mistake was made, if a player did not get off the ground for a header, knocked over a cone in dribbling practice, or failed to adequately control the ball, the whole training field would quickly know about it. In itself, this may be viewed as some form of public humiliation, in that masculine image was, to a large degree, associated with playing ability. However, voluble public praise was also a familiar ingredient of Jay's coaching style, and with both reproach and praise, there was no noticeable favouritism:

> He [*Jay*] can be quite critical, I suppose. But he does it to everyone and he's kind of constructive about it as well. Like, he'll tell you what you're doing is shit, but then at least he'll tell you why it's shit [*laughs*]. Anyway, being shouted at is part of

> the whole football thing, isn't it? If you can't accept that then, you know, what are you, kind of thing [*laughs*]?
>
> (Brad)

> I think he's [*Jay*] a good bloke. I mean, like, he shouts at you, gives you a good going over, like, but he gives you a pat on the back when you deserve it too.
>
> (Michael)

The ability to take criticism and a verbal 'going over' and accept the coach's and the captain's comments was viewed as part of the game, and deference to this authority was compulsory. Non-conformity would raise the potential for further castigation and derision from the players. While both Daniel and Jay challenged conventional notions of homophobic and misogynistic authoritarianism in coach/player relationships, they were authoritative nonetheless. Despite the absence of public humiliation and demasculinising chastisement that has been noted in other studies (e.g. Parker, 1996c; Sabo and Panepinto, 1990), the 'toned-down' authoritarianism at BCUC may still exemplify hegemonic masculinity and dominant conceptualisations of the gender order. Indeed, as Brad articulated, if one cannot accept shouting and rebuke, then 'what are you'? Presumably someone not worthy of being on the team, not worthy of being a footballing man. Moreover, Daniel and Michael were both coaches of women's football teams, and both saw a vociferous, authoritarian coaching style as one of the fundamental differences between coaching men and women in football:

> Yeah, when I coach the girls, it's, er... it is different, definitely. I mean, obviously I don't really coach the lads here – it's a managing role, really – but I do take a different approach with the girls compared to the lads, definitely. [...] It's kind of more about helping them to improve – which is obviously quite rewarding – but most of them are just there to have fun, so winning ain't really as important. It's the same with kids, too, 'cus I spent some time in America coaching kids, and didn't go quite so mad with them either. With the lads on a Wednesday, they all know how to play football, so coaching them and managing them is about motivating and encouraging them to do as well as they can. So I get much more worked up and stuff and, I dunno, kind of lay it on the line, kind of thing... which I don't do with the girls.
>
> (Daniel)

> M: No, you don't really do that with the girls. I don't anyway. I don't shout and swear at them or nothing, 'cus... I don't know why. I just don't [*laughs*].
>
> *BC: Why do think that that's acceptable in coaching men and not women?*
>
> M: I don't know. I guess it's 'cus... [*laughs*], erm, it's because they're... they're there for different reasons to men, I guess. I mean, blokes take it more seriously, maybe, and are kind of willing to accept a bit of being shouted at.
>
> (Michael)

Sport, then, and particularly football, was viewed as a male domain and women's football was seen as something 'less than' – less serious than – the male equivalent. Accepting reproach and being shouted at was a gendered capacity that separated men from women and, as Daniel articulated, also separated the men from the boys. In this sense, deference to authority aligned itself with a configuration of gender practice, which legitimated the dominant position of men and, therefore, may be interpreted as a hegemonic masculine pattern (see Connell, 1995).

Injury and Masculinity

Male hegemony and men's claim to patriarchal dividends is always precarious. As Segal (1990: 287) has noted, men's social power 'imprisons [them] in a deadening masculinity'. That is to say, men seemingly feel compelled to engage in a process of legitimation (hegemonic masculinity), which is thwarted with potentially dangerous behaviours. According to Kimmel (1995: vii):

> Most of the leading causes of death among men are the results of men's behaviours – gendered behaviours that leave men more vulnerable to certain illnesses and not others. Masculinity is one of the more significant risk factors associated with men's health.

The hegemonic masculine codes that endorse sports violence – legal or otherwise – leave men particularly vulnerable to injury. Many of the football players at BCUC, as already noted, favour a 'hard' playing style, which, it would be fair to suggest, increased the potential for injury to self and others. While even the 'hardest' of these men opposed excessive violence – causing intentional injury and 'going too far' – the hard tackling, intimidating style was a particularly

masculinistic playing attitude. Despite this, over the coarse of the 2002/03 season, none of the players suffered serious, long-term injury. But, in a sport such as football, injury was a risk that all of the men were well aware of.

In contrast to a great deal of existing research that suggests codes of masculinity cause men to suppress sports-related pain and play while injured (e.g. Messner, 1992; Young and White, 1998; Young and White, 2000; Young *et al*, 1994), and that they are even encouraged to do so by coaches, administrators and the media (Harris and Clayton, 2002b; Messner, 1992; Sabo and Panepinto, 1990), injuries were taken very seriously at BCUC. The coach, Jay, in particular, was always quick to 'rest' players from the rigours of training if they experienced any tightness or twinges (in their muscles), and would readily give advice on how to ensure the injury didn't develop. I, myself, experienced a tight hamstring during a training session, and Jay was adamant that was to take no further part in the session (despite my protests that I could 'run it off'). The players, too, expressed their view that playing while injured was 'stupid', summed up in the following comments:

> I just can't understand that, personally. It frustrates me that, when there's so many people that would do anything to play football at a good level, that some people who do are so stupid and risk it all.
>
> (Andrew)

> It's just stupid, really. You just take the time out, do what's necessary and then come back.
>
> (Gary)

> It's not worth the risk, is it? Guys that do are just idiots, really.
>
> (Richard)

But, while attitudes like those above were rife among the men, the strain of hegemonic masculinity that causes men to suppress pain and injury was also evident when talking to the players. Indeed, Andrew, just a few short minutes later in the interview, challenged his own views (above) when telling of a recurring injury:

> A: I've had a returning problem with my knees. When I went on tour to Holland – I know how I did it – I tried to clear the ball and my leg was high up in the air and it collided with some other guy's shoulder. My knee was just really swollen and I couldn't bend it, and I was in excruciating pain, so I was stretchered off the pitch [...]
>
> *BC: When you were sidelined, were you ever tempted to start playing again before your injury had healed properly?*
>
> A: Oh, sure. Yeah, I did that. I think that's why I kept having problems with my knees. I should have been out for about a year, but I rested it for about three months. I've now got one of them knee supports, which I have to wear.
>
> (Andrew)

The competing discourses experienced by Andrew confessed the 'stupidity' of playing while injured, but compelled him to suppress this knowledge and play football regardless. Messner (1992) asserts that the reasons why so many athletes continue to 'give up their bodies' by playing while injured are twofold: Firstly, there are the 'external pressures', which embody the values of the sportsworld that 'you are only as good as your last game', and will be judged negatively by those around you (ibid: 72). Secondly, there are 'internal factors' – specifically, a 'powerful motivating force working in conjunction with external factors' (ibid: 74). In short, hegemonic masculine codes compelled Andrew to give up other feelings through a fear of acquiring subordinating, homophobic or misogynistic labels, but also because of the loss of masculine identity felt by the absence of football in his life. As Andrew noted:

> I just... I felt a bit lost without football, to tell the truth. It took me quite a while to get back. Even when I was back in training, I felt a bit different, a bit lost. I felt like I needed to train a bit harder to get back to the way I was.
>
> (Andrew)

This intense commitment among men to their roles as athletes has been explored at some length by Messner (1992). Here, Messner declares a 'neat fit' – an affinity – between the structure of sport and developing masculine identities. That is to say, there is a dovetailing of the competitive structure and values of the sports world with the tendency of men to define themselves positionally. Football

may be one of the few remaining arenas in which Andrew, and all male football players, can demonstrate and develop their 'manliness', and legitimate their privileged position in society. There remains a fundamental association between sport involvement and dominant, heterosexual masculinity, and, therefore, absence from sport impacts on (or is perceived to impact on) individual masculine identities. It is this connection that leads men to engage with 'dangerous masculinities' (see Young and White, 2000), which, as Andrew discovered, can have serious consequences for long-term health (see also Messner, 1992).

Daniel had also suffered injury in the past, which was far more serious than that of Andrew's. The role of team captain at BCUC was one of a player/manager, but Daniel was unable to play competitive football during much of this study, due to a recurring knee injury suffered when he played for an under-eighteens side.

> Because I've always been interested in football, I wanted to be involved in it ever since I can remember, and when I was, er... when I got injured, which was around the time I was looking at what courses I wanted to do at university and whatever, and the course I'm doing – Sports Management and Football Studies – in the first year, you do a coaching certificate. So that's what led me to wanna do the course, 'cus I thought, if I can't play, then if I can coach then at least I'm involved in doing something.
>
> (Daniel)

Unlike Andrew, Daniel was not willing to risk playing on what he knew was a serious injury and, thus, broke many of the ties to hegemonic masculinity by disregarding the 'external pressures'. But the 'internal' structure of masculinity continued to induce the need for Daniel to construct his male identity around football. As such he was compelled to find another 'route' to hegemonic masculine footballing identity, to preserve some association with the sport, through related HE qualifications, coaching and management (see also Messner, 1992).

Football, Masculinity, and 'Other'

> If I played a different sport, I'm sure that things would be different [...]. The way I walk, the way I dress would be

> different for sure. Obviously, the way I'm looked at would be different – like, not so good, a bit less of a man. I definitely think football contributes to me being a man. It's a major factor.
> (Andrew)

For the men at BCUC, football was the ultimate masculine pursuit and overwhelmingly contributed to their masculine guise. Messner (1992) notes that young males come to sport with identities that lead them to define their athletic experiences differently than female athletes do. The measure of men's identity imperatives that are fed by the aggressive, competitive and homosocial hand of football should not be underestimated. When asked to define what it is to be a man, all of the football players threaded football servitude somewhere into the weave, expressing the importance of athletic ability and success. Football competence was particularly important in definitions of manhood when these men were young; perhaps consumed by the heroic rhetoric attached to their mediated football idols and in organised team sport and play in their schools and peer groups. Masculine status among friends and peers, as Steve noted, was customarily associated with football participation:

> If you played in the football team then you were like... one of the top men kind of thing. Nobody gave a shit about handball and all the other sports teams – football's what it was all about.
> (Steve)

This pattern continued into adulthood, linking maleness with valued football skills, and in the development of 'gender as personality' (see Connell, 1987b) football participation procured the hegemonic position. Football, then, was defined and perceived as an embodiment of dominant masculinity in a dialectical process, which also defined what is not approved. That is to say, each cultural message about football and masculinity was a dual one, celebrating the dominant and, simultaneously, inferiorising the 'other' (see also Bryson, 1990). The 'other', in this case, was women and non-footballing men.

Football Vs. Rugby in the Manhood Stakes

As we saw in Chapter 4, football and rugby developed as one sport until the Harrovian and Cambridge code of football was established in 1863, banning hacking and the handling of the ball. The latter practice was retained by the

Rugby Football Union, which established its code in 1871 (Armstrong and Giulianotti, 1999). The rivalry of the two sports since their division and the identity associated with each has predominantly been concerned with class differences: rugby remaining staunchly middle-class, while football split from its public school roots and nestled comfortably into working-class sub-culture.

Such is the masculinised, competitive sporting arena that the enmity between football and rugby has powerfully lingered on in popular discourse. At BCUC, this hostility was evident, but was somewhat formless. That is to say, I never witnessed any fighting or antagonism during my observational period, but clearly some hostility existed:

> On Wednesday nights out they... erm... you hear the football players shouting out 'the rugby players are wankers' and vice-versa, and I've heard of a few fights that's been going on.
>
> (Anthony)

> There used to be loads of fights and that between the rugby and football lads because, er... but like now, they, er... if you fight then you're banned from the Union, and maybe the sports teams too.
>
> (Steve)

Indeed all of the players suggested that they had heard about, witnessed or been involved in antagonistic behaviour towards the rugby players. Professed motives for the hostility varied from player to player; some laying the responsibility solely with the consumption of alcohol:

> It's just because everyone's pissed up basically.
>
> (Richard)

> It's about nothing really – just alcohol induced.
>
> (Michael)

The consumption of alcohol may well have played a part in this, but this cannot explain why the hostility only seems to exist between rugby and football players and not with members of the other sports teams, or with non-sporting students. Historically, the conflict could be associated with the class identities of the players, but this did not seem to be a consideration among the men I interviewed.

In fact, very few of the players were able to afford me a motive for the conflict, but those who did spoke of the self-worth and masculine identity associated with the two sports:

> Playing football, I would say that – I'm probably biased here – a football person will get more attention, I'd say. People watch football more than they do rugby; people are more likely to watch football and choose football. So in those terms I'd say there will be a clash of egos.
>
> (Andrew)

> They're just like jealous, I think. Football is far more skilful. I mean, anybody can catch a ball and run with it, and get tackled to the ground, whereas football tactics play a much bigger part – it's certainly more skilful. You've got to use your feet; you've got to basically use all parts of your body. I see rugby as something frustrated footballers play because they're not good enough to play football.
>
> (Michael)

> We think that football is *the* sport, and they think rugby is *the* sport. I think that's the only thing. [...] Both groups [*footballers and rugby players*]... their nights out are so male orientated, like based on beer drinking, pulling [*seeking to attract*] women and showing who's the hardest. They're both like hard sports, and it's all about which one is *the* hardest.
>
> (Steve)

The rivalry between BCUC's football and rugby teams, then, may not be based upon class identity, but upon the masculine identity associated with each sport. Most of the players conceded that both sports required traditionally masculine traits of strength, aggression and skill, but ultimately felt that the technical ability requisite to football prevailed over the physical strength and 'thuggishness' (as Steve put it) of rugby in the manhood stakes. Thus, rugby players were a marginalised group (see Connell, 1995), not subordinated as 'unmasculine' in the way that women and gay men were, but, rather, the masculinities they displayed were considered different and even inferior to those valued by the football players.

The vocal dislike of rugby was essential in the acquisition of football identity. The masculinities associated with each sport were seen to be 'different', despite confessions of the players that the aesthetics of the two sports were both 'macho',

and the behaviours and cultures were discussed as being very similar (in that they were both described by the men as involving things like heavy drinking, pulling women, carousing and fighting). This is consistent with most scholarly descriptions of the two sports (e.g. Morris, 1981; Nauright and Chandler, 1996; Giulianotti, 1999); both aesthetically and subculturally 'masculine' and, perhaps, both rooted in the nostalgia of the brutal game of folk football in England (see especially Dunning, 1999).

Given that the footballers tended to acknowledge this, the hostility between rugby and football players may be considered to be historically constructed; based upon, but no longer relating to, the class distinctions that developed at the time of the respective codification of the two sport. With this in mind, it may be fair to suggest that with a male footballing identity, men necessarily inherit a rivalry with rugby players. The men were unable to concede that their chosen sport of football may not be the most 'manly' and, thus, rugby and rugby players became placed in the bracket of 'the other' – perhaps complicit to the hegemonic ideals of the football players, but, nonetheless, different and inferior and, therefore, marginalised. This seems to be the theme of Sean's reasoning behind the rugby/football conflict, which appears to be the only available explanation:

> We play football; they play rugby... that's it.
>
> (Sean)

Still a Man's Game? Perceptions of Women's Football

It is rarely seen as appropriate or indeed 'fair', given the gendered history of football in Britain, to make a comparison between the women's game and that of the men. However, with the rise in registered female players, the rise in women reporting on the game, and the general ongoing struggle for women to make headway in football, it is perhaps becoming inevitable that comparisons will be made.

The range of perspectives on women's football among the men at BCUC differed enormously. Daniel and Michael, both of whom coach women's football teams,

were very supportive of the game and both noted that women tend to be much more responsive than men in a training environment. As Daniel noted:

> I really like being involved in women's football. I much prefer to coach them than men. I just wish that everyone felt the same and we can reach the standard in this country that's been set in like Sweden, Germany and America.
>
> (Daniel)

The majority of the men took the middle ground on the subject of women's football and Gary typified their comments:

> I do support women's football, and if they were playing somewhere then I'd probably watch but I can't say I'm too interested – I wouldn't go out of my way, kind of thing. It's not really as exciting to watch compared to like men's football. But when I went to America a couple of years ago, there were like loads of women's teams and they were quite impressive to watch. If it got to that standard here then I'd be hooked.
>
> (Gary)

Comments such as these in some ways reflect the views expressed by Daniel and Michael, but they suggest that the promotion of women's football is not their concern. That is, the right for women to play football and to gain due economic and social support is wholeheartedly defended by the men, but the game itself is nonetheless viewed as inferior to the already established corresponding male alternative. Interestingly, this also appears to be the view held by the collegiate women footballers of Harris's (1998) earlier case study at BCUC. In 'shaping up to men' these women noted a host of reasons for this inferiority, ranging from the actual structure of football at the University College to the physical differences between the sexes.

Two of the men took a much harder line when discussing their views on women's football, fiercely defending the sport as a male-only domain. Steve was particularly vocal about the issue:

> S: Women's football? Oh, no, no, no! That's, er... we don't really rate our [*national*] women's football team that much. But I think they made it to the European Championship final in, I dunno, 2001 or something like that, I think... yeah against Germany. So they're actually quite good, but I, er... I couldn't

really give a monkeys to be honest. Women's football is not football for me. I don't believe in women's football. I really don't.

*BC: Why not?*

S: Well, call me sexist, anything, I don't... I don't care. No, no, no, but I don't believe in women's football!

*BC: Why?*

S: I think they're not made to play football. It's just, er... it's not a female game. Same as rugby, er... I mean, it's not their sort of game. [...] The goalkeepers are just horrible in women's football, and it's just a... it's a piss-take really when women play football, and I don't like it at all. I don't find it attractive or appealing. I just don't associate women with playing football, that's it! I mean my love for the sport is so great that I don't want it being degraded by women playing it. They're just not good enough!

*BC: What sports do you associate women with?*

S: I, er... I dunno. Certainly nothing that's like, erm... kind of for men. That's just not attractive.

*BC: What's not attractive, the aesthetics of the sport or the women themselves?*

S: Well, both. I, erm... it's just not a sport for women and the women footballers I know are... they just don't look attractive! The goalkeepers are just... well...

*BC: I don't think their motivation for playing the game is to look attractive to men. I mean, are yours to look attractive to women?*

S: No, no, but I don't look, erm... unattractive when I play, or, er... no more than usual (*laughs*). But women... they just ruin my enjoyment of the game.

(Steve)

I quote the discussion between Steve and myself here at some length because I feel it reflects the dominant assumption about men's attitudes towards women's football in general. His comments are indicative of much research concerning the body image of women football players (e.g. Cox and Thompson, 2000; Griffin, 1992) and, specifically, the association of traditionally male sports and

masculinisation, unattractiveness and lesbian tendencies. For Steve, it seemed, women's participation in football detracted from the identity it gave him, 'polluting' the game in some way with feminine traits. Moreover, on a wider social scale, he suggested that football participation undermined the culturally acceptable 'womanliness' he was familiar with and comfortable with.

While the particular idiosyncrasies of hegemonic masculinity may vary from one locale to another, Connell (1995) purports that it is always a configuration of gender practice that guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women. Steve's commitment to male hegemony and the maintenance of football as a hegemonic arena is clear. Not only does he believe that football should be an exclusively male preserve and that only men have the physical and psychological attributes to play the sport, but he also believes that women should embody traditional 'womanly' characteristics in appearance and behaviour. Elsewhere, I have referred to this 'type' of femininity as 'hegemonic femininity' (Harris and Clayton, 2002b), because traditional womanliness is complicit to masculine ideology, promoting a fundamental dichotomy between men and women with regard to such attributes as physicality, fragility and emotionality. By placing (or attempting to place) women in a supportive or 'expressive' (Parsons and Bales, 1953) role, Steve lends himself to the hegemonic cause of legitimising men's dominant position in society, and in sport. Brad also expressed concerns over women's involvement in football:

> B: I've never watched it and never will. I don't like women playing football. It's just not something I think they should do.
>
> *BC: Why not?*
>
> B: I just don't think it suits them. There are plenty of women's sports like... I dunno... hockey, tennis, netball, stuff like that. There's no need for them to kind of invade our territory, you know?
>
> *BC: Whose territory? Men's?*
>
> B: Yeah. Football's not like... you know?
>
> *BC: Feminine?*

B: Yeah exactly, it's not feminine.

(Brad)

Deferring to the reflexive approach I have assumed in this case study, I am aware that I may have led Brad (to some degree) to suggest that football 'is not feminine', but this did seem to be the direction in which he was taking the conversation. Like Steve, Brad articulates some misgivings about the 'masculinised' image of women football players, and expresses a fear that women are in some way going to 'take over' the male realm of football. The dynamic character of Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony implies a social struggle for power, rather than the total and necessary domination and the unproblematic reproduction of this position often portrayed in functionalist theory (see also Connell, 1987a, 1995). Women's involvement in football is taken to be a challenge to the male domination and machismo of the sport. Sport, and particularly football (in the UK), may be a primarily ritualistic arena in which expressions of masculinity and sexism are communicated and acted out (see especially Cagnon, 1974; McKay, Messner and Sabo, 2000; Messner, 1992; Parker, 2001; Russell, 1999), and any female involvement in this arena may be seen as an attempt to resist athletic subordination and to 'feminise' football. As Brad and Steve envisage it, the dominance of men, and of masculinity, in the football milieu, has begun to erode, and the hegemonic project and the defence of patriarchy calls for the subordination, trivialisation and marginalisation of women football players.

It should be noted, however, that these views on women's participation were not the norm among the football players at BCUC. This may be considered as further evidence of the complex and multi-faceted nature of male footballing identity amongst team members, and the array of cultural sources from which this identity is constructed. Moreover, the fact that so many of the men rejected traditional assumptions about women athletes demonstrates a clear and present resistance to hegemonic notions. However, on closer examination, this may not be the case. Indeed, the majority of players were not overtly masculinist in their opinions on women's entry into football, and even encouraged the growth of the game, but it was only Daniel and Michael that made a concerted effort to support the movement. These two players demonstrated masculinities – attitudes and

behaviours – that defied Western cultural hegemony. The remaining men were not willing to take an active interest in women's football and, indeed, confessed to finding it 'less than' (less interesting, less watchable) the male equivalent. As such, while not forerunners in the hegemonic subordination of women, they were nonetheless complicit to the values of cultural hegemony and the masculinised sports world. In accord with Connell's (1995) notion of complicity and complicit masculinities, the number of men that actually oppose women's entry into football may be quite small, but most men (particularly footballers) do benefit from the male domination of the sport and, therefore, decline active support for the movement.

Summary

This chapter has reflected on the key organisational structures and agents around which the BCUC players' masculinities were constructed. Significantly, BCUC football cannot be considered in terms of totality. It is, rather, a union of two institutional cultures, that of football and Higher Education, which cannot be separated. As a result, the men developed two sets of masculinities, which, necessarily, conflict and create numerous contradictions and inconsistencies. Having realised, and come to terms with, the waning prospect of playing football at a professional level, the men all place a great deal of importance on gaining a degree for their future plans. To be qualified, have good job prospects and some financial procuribility was a core component of these men's masculine identities. But football also remained key to this identity, evidenced by the desire of most of the players to both continue playing and find a career associated with the sport (see Chapter 6).

I have contended in this chapter that there is a wide demarcation of the cultural norms and values of football and HE, predominantly relating to traditional social class peculiarities. That is to say, the men's aspirations with regard to education and career are, I have inferred, characteristic of middle-class masculinities, which inevitably collide with football's working-class procedures. The construction of masculinities, however, is a collective practice, and is contextually bound. Thus, in the football context, dedication to one's academic studies was devalued and even, on occasion, a cause for emasculation and subordination. Indeed, the men's

collegiate football masculinities were regularly constructed in defiance of, and as a foil for, the university college's norms, values and expectations.

In many cases, the rebelliousness of the players in this regard was not intentional. It was, rather, a part of the socialising processes advocated by the numerous cultural agents in the football structure. Here, hardiness, an aggressive competitive attitude and a disciplined respect for the football chain of authority took precedence over academic work and the codes and hierarchies of the wider institution. But there was not a total disrespect for these latter values. Indeed, there was a certain amount of pride among the men that they were representing their HE institution, and practices that could potentially damage the reputation of the university college were considered to exceed the bounds of masculinity.

The potential to 'go too far' (in terms of aggressiveness and sexual innuendo/advances) was an aspect of many of the learned and celebrated masculinities in the football collective, and was one that was discouraged and subordinated. For instance, 'mucking around' and 'having a laugh' was a key feature of training ground practice, but players that were seen to disregard the authority of the coach or captain, or weaken the team's bid for success, were quickly subordinated. Similarly, a keen hardiness and 'pushing the body to the limit', and also an aggressive courageousness in the game, were core features of hegemonic masculine identity, but not to a point where this could cause injury to self or other. Considering the importance the men gave to football in the construction of maleness, injury posed a real threat to their masculine identity.

This chapter has been concerned with the construction of masculinities in and around the everyday routines of football and Higher Education – masculinities that are 'directly' acquired in the pursuit of football competence. The next chapter explores some of the emerging issues in the sub-cultural pursuits of the BCUC players. These masculinities, I contend, are 'indirectly' acquired through football.

# Chapter 8:

# Indirect Masculinities: Subculture, Fraternity, and Men

As with chapter seven, this chapter offers a rich description of the football players' behaviours as a collective, and of the construction of dominant masculinities and individual positional identities in the group. While the previous chapter was predominantly contextualised to the training ground and the match-day itself, here the sub-cultural construction of masculinity is considered, largely situated within the locales of the university college's Student Union bar and the changing rooms. This discussion is framed around the notion that the behaviours and actions observed, here, are 'indirectly' associated with the act of playing collegiate football, and are underpinned by a hegemonic masculine sub-culture of drinking and sexual conquests.

The consumption of alcohol, in particular, has an important bearing on the phenomena described in this chapter, and may be considered as a cohesive element – a unifying activity – that lends itself to the hegemonic project operating in this milieu. Indeed, much of the existing research into male drinking culture, particularly amongst athletes, focuses not on the act of drinking itself as a masculine pursuit, but on the resultant masculinities (see Crosset, 2000; Curry, 1998, 2000; Gough and Edwards, 1998; Messner, 1992). In this chapter the emerging themes are discussed separately for analytical purposes, but it should be noted that many of the behaviours described cannot be removed from the overall drinking context.

## Theorising Football's 'Indirect' Masculinities

A wealth of literature has testified to the 'male dominated, and machismo' culture of football (Redhead, 1995: 108), alluding to football's hegemonic masculinity as 'uniformly aggressive and humourlessly chauvinistic' (Giulianotti, 1999: 155; see

also Holt, 1989; Parker, 2001; Russell, 1999; Williams, 1994; Williams and Woodhouse, 1991). The football culture at BCUC was no exception. The previous chapter noted the formation of a gender order against the backdrop of football's aesthetics and organisational norms and values, and the norms and values of Higher Education. Whilst masculinities were developed here through dialectical socialisation processes, harmonising with or directly opposing organisational structures, away from the 'football act' itself the acquisition of manliness was more immediately concerned with issues of alcohol consumption, carousing, and dialogue about, and the pursuit of, women.

These sub-cultural norms and values are considered here as 'indirect masculinities', the off-the-pitch identities of the players that were constructed against a collective blueprint of apposite male behaviour. In accordance with the critical feminist stance taken throughout this thesis, Gramsci's (1971) conceptualisation of hegemony and Connell's (1987a, 1995) notion of compound, relational masculinities are used to frame the overall account of the players' sub-cultural pursuits (see Chapter 2 for a fuller explanation of this position). Finally, in my theorising of indirect masculinities, masculinity is considered here as 'collective practice' (see also Connell, 1995). That is to say, the players share a ritualised relationship in which an acceptable masculinity is sustained in the football milieu, but elsewhere the individual men may not be the exemplification of these behavioural patterns, or, if they do exemplify the same masculine composition, it may not be received in the same way as it is as a group activity. While individual practice is, of course, required, it is the team as a whole that is the bearer of masculinity.

Carousing

> I think that the guys at the Union after Wednesday's football match is the definition of masculinity. That is masculinity for me. The way we behave on a Wednesday night... that's, er... it's not really the way men should be, but it's the way men generally are.
>
> (Steve)

The interplay between male sport's subculture, carousing and some of its consequences, and masculine identity has been a material aspect of much recent pro-feminist debate (e.g. Crosset, 2000; Curry, 1998, 2000; Hughson, 2000; Sabo, Gray and Moore, 2000; White and Vagi, 1990). Central to this discussion is the (excessive) consumption of alcohol by male athletes as an inherent sub-activity, and its causal social problems. Indeed, the bar has traditionally been an integral part of the British football experience (see for example Mason, 1980), and revelry and the consumption of alcohol may be a potent resource for the enactment of conventional masculine identities (Gough and Edwards, 1998; Wilmot and Griffin, 1997).

'Partying' was the ultimate Wednesday night pursuit of the men at BCUC, as a contrast to the 'seriousness' of the afternoon match. As Daniel noted:

> It's a chance to go out, have a laugh and kind of remember or forget what happened in the game. Like, celebrate and relive the wins or... well not really drown our sorrows, 'cus we just put it behind us [if we lose] and focus on the next game, but it [*a night out*] helps us to forget it and get back to being like happy and positive. [...] It's not compulsory, obviously, but all the lads are expected to come down the Union and have a few beers, like. Not everyone does, you know, and there's nothing I can do about it, but they should do, really. Like, Wednesdays are <u>the</u> night out for all the sports teams, 'cus all the teams play on Wednesday afternoon, so all the teams are represented there and we want our team to be represented too.
>
> (Daniel)

Indeed, Wednesday nights at the Student Union bar were markedly segregated by team and sport. While each individual player would drift between groups of friends, the nucleus of the team would remain in the same place, claiming a particular table or seating area, as if to mark a specific territory. It was not entirely territorial or exclusive, in that friends of the players would regularly come and sit and talk as well, and were welcomed by the team. But these individuals were always outsiders, often forced to stand or perch on the arm of chair (even if a seat was temporarily free, they were politely told that someone was already sitting there), and were never included when a round of drinks were being bought. This was, perhaps, a symbol of subordination, where the team were a collective and

anyone else was simply 'othered' and, while not aggressively marginalised or inferiorised, were not considered bearers of the team's hegemonic values. Thus, there was always a fraternal barrier, affably enacted but nonetheless unmistakably drawing a line between 'them' and 'us'. In viewing masculinity as collective practice (see Connell, 1995), it is clear, here, that the team members' practices were comparatively exclusive, and much of the intimacy and fraternal bond of the team is developed through this exclusivity of peer-group dynamics. Thus, the collective practices of the team were policed, limiting (potential) outside influences, which may create tendencies to break, or interfere with, the established hegemonic patterns (see also Messner, 1992).

The ritualised bonding – by way of carousing after a match – was something identified as very important by most of the players.

> It's definitely an important part, because without that it wouldn't be so much fun. [...] I think you develop a kind of togetherness, establish boundaries, become a unit, kind of thing, which is obviously important for when you're on the pitch, too.
>
> (Gary)

> Wednesday nights are really good 'cus everyone's just up for a good crack [*some fun*]. [...] It's important to socialise with everyone. It's good for team spirit and stuff, but also good for you, kind of thing. I mean, if you're always out on a Wednesday night and getting on with everyone and having a good time then you're more likely to get into the team, because you put your face about, sort of thing.
>
> (Richard)

> I think it's part of the team culture. [...] Let's get 'em out there and, like, build the team culture kind of thing. The drinking culture is very important because you... it's, er... it's a socialising thing more than anything. [...] The people who didn't go out after the first two or three matches weren't picked again, because, like, it's not only about the football, it's about the socialising as well, definitely. It's very important.
>
> (Steve)

Daniel strongly denied the suggestion in the last two comments (above) that a player's attendance, or absence, on a Wednesday night influenced his team selection decisions. But, elsewhere, he was very clear that he expected players to attend and felt this to be important for the team. Moreover, those players who

rarely socialised with the team on a Wednesday (Gavin and Robert, both of whom I only saw at the Union on one occasion) were habitually the team substitutes, rather than infiltrating the starting line-up.

Wednesday nights at the Student Union bar were marked by a number of specific hegemonic masculine behavioural patterns, all of which were collective practice, rather than being concerned with individual image construction. This is not to say that individual identity did not play a part – indeed perceptions of self are influenced by positioning within a group – but this was associated with peer-group status, rather than team status, which, as I have already noted, was the prime bearer of masculinity. I shall discuss these behavioural patterns now, in turn, but it should be noted at this point that they are not mutually exclusive and the consumption of alcohol, in particular, was involved in or fuelled many of the other actions.

'Big' Drinking

Drinking alcohol was at the very centre of the BCUC football sub-culture. Arriving sporadically, the first action for each of the men was to purchase a drink from the bar, before, even, establishing the presence or whereabouts of team-mates. To arrive at the table 'drinkless' was, as I found out, treated as something improper, as if it were some kind of delaying tactic suggestive of a low tolerance to alcohol.

> Daniel: You alright, mate? You not having a drink?
> Alex: Fucking 'ell, Ben. Get yourself a beer. I know you're like some academic type, but you've still gotta keep up with us boys [*everyone laughs*].
> BC: Alright, I'm just gonna get one now.
> Sean: You can't come and sit down 'til you've got a beer in your hand. It's like a fucking requirement... a password.
> Alex: A fucking key-card [*laughter*].

To a degree, the team defined itself in the social milieu by how much its members could drink, and each individual was expected to 'keep up' with the group as a whole. This was particularly apparent when some players had turned up late, and would be constantly reminded throughout the evening that they had had less to

drink than those whom arrived earlier. While the overall masculine guise of the team was predominantly concerned with an image of all members being 'big drinkers', within the group itself, individual masculine positional identity was established by way of being a bigger drinker than other players. Each individual was expected to match others drink-for-drink, to finish a drink at approximately the same time and be ready for the next one. To not have finished a drink in time for the next round, however, was not immediately associated as unmasculine. The man concerned, rather, had a second chance to 'prove' himself should he still have alcohol left in the glass, by 'downing' (drinking at one attempt) the remainder, usually to a chorus of chanting, "Down, down, down". Should he do this, he was met with a loud cheer and no more was said about the matter. Failure to 'down' the drink, however, would result in castigation in the form of groans of dissatisfaction, or even subordinating labels such as 'pussy', 'woman', and 'gay'.

Scenes like these were a regular feature of the Wednesday night out, where a simplistic dichotomy, associating the ability to drink with masculinity and inability with femininity, was instilled into sub-cultural practice. Here, it is clear that the ability to consume large quantities of alcohol was something that separated heterosexual men from gay men and from women, and also separated 'weak' men ('pussies') from 'real' men. Drinking, in this sense, was a power dynamic that legitimated the dominant position of heterosexual men and, thus, was a hegemonic masculine practice (see Connell, 1987a, 1995) and was highly valued in the football sub-culture.

Despite this, and the prevalent stereotype that all male football players (and students) drink heavily and regularly, one of the players, Andrew, professed to not being a big drinker:

> A: I do drink, but I don't drink much. I don't really like the feeling [*of being drunk*]. [...] They all think it's like so macho to get wrecked and that, and a few times I think to myself I should too. But I really wouldn't want to, erm... like pass-out or throw-up all over the place, or like piss myself and things – 'cus I've seen that happen before [*laughs*] – and then you, like, wake up the next day and feel terrible. I mean, what's so macho

about that? I'd rather be sober and have a laugh, but know what I'm doing.

*BC: Do you ever get any stick from the lads for not drinking?*

A: Yeah, I used to, but not anymore. They used to, like, call me stuff that I didn't like, like they called me a faggot and a pussy, just because I didn't want to get wrecked like them. But now they just accept it, accept that that's who I am. They give me respect for it now, I'd say.

(Andrew)

Andrew raises some interesting points, here, that are well worthy of further discussion. First, he recalls that he used to be on the receiving end of the same type of subordinating, homophobic rhetoric that was noted earlier, which displayed a symbolic blurring of non-drinking, or 'light' drinking, with femininity and/or homosexuality. Homophobic discourse, in particular, as Curry (1991) has noted, is prevalent in sporting contexts, and may be considered a defensive manoeuvre designed to create distance between heterosexual self (or collective) and homosexual other. The use of such language helps to distance homosexuality and produces certain effects, and by so doing, strengthens hegemonic masculinity (Gough and Edwards, 1998; see also Connell, 1995). Andrew, in the view of the other football players, departed from conventional masculine scripts by spurning the excessive consumption of alcohol, and was consequently burdened with effeminate or otherwise inferiorising names, therefore distancing him from, and, accordingly, protecting the hegemonic masculine guise of the collective.

The second point to note from Andrew's comments is that after a spell of incurring the team's derision, he was eventually shown acceptance and even respect for his position on drinking. Feminising and homophobic discourse was, in nearly all cases, jocular and, what is more, known to be untrue. As a known heterosexual and a bearer of the premier values in other spheres of hegemonic masculinity, Andrew may have countered questions of 'otherness' satisfactorily enough to assume a position of status in the more permanent avenues of the team's particular brand of hegemonic masculinity. Jokes and derision concerning his attitude toward the consumption of alcohol, therefore, were transitory. Moreover, given that he did not reject alcohol altogether, drinking when with his team-mates, and had few qualms about the drinking culture as a whole, Andrew

may have demonstrated an acceptable level of complicity to the hegemonic patterns of the team in this respect.

The third and final point made by Andrew is the paradox of the masculine deed of excessive drinking and its 'feminine' consequences. While heavy drinking itself was a highly valued trait among the players, and one that the collective guise was keen to connect with, feeling unwell as a result of alcohol intake, vomiting, passing out and retiring home early, were considerably less valued. On one occasion at the Union, Gavin became quite ill through alcohol consumption about mid-way through the evening (this was, incidentally, the only occasion that Gavin had frequented the bar with the other players). Upon turning a colour that can only be described as pale, he quickly became the focus of attention (and ridicule) for all of the players.

> Steve: Shit, man, check this out [*points in Gavin's direction*]
> [*All of the players began pointing and laughing at Gavin*]
> Sean: You alright, Gav [*laughs*]?
> Alex: He's throwing a fucking whitey, man! Fucking 'ell!
> Steve: How much has he had [to drink]?
> Alex: Not much. Not enough. 'Ere, get that down ya [*pushes a shot of some spirit towards Gavin*].
> Daniel: Fucking 'ell, I don't think he needs any more, does he [*laughs*]?
> Sean: Fucking knock it back! Come on.

Gavin proceeded to drink the offering. As Gough and Edwards (1998) have implied, feelings of inadequacy about one's masculine self and desires of belonging and acceptance can often cause men to conform or act in ways that they feel will earn status among other men. In this sense, Gavin continued to drink, despite his awareness that it would make him sick, in an attempt to salvage some masculine pride, which had taken a hit by way of his peers laughing about his alcohol-induced illness. In the short-term, this appeared to have worked. After he had consumed the shot, the players reverted back to the previous conversation. But it was not long before Gavin slipped away from the group, predominantly unnoticed until Steve returned from the toilet to reveal to everyone that Gavin was in there, vomiting. In an almost synchronized movement, all of the men jumped from their seats and rushed to the toilets, to laugh at their team-mate. The now

familiar feminised and homophobic rhetoric formed the basis of much their mockery, labelling Gavin with words like 'pussy' and 'woman'.

On another occasion, Brad decided to leave the Union and go home at about eleven o'clock (three hours before closing). While I was not in the vicinity when Brad left, I caught the resulting conversation of the players shortly afterwards.

> Richard: Why's he gone home for?
> Daniel: I don't think he felt too good. And he's gotta get up early tomorrow as well.
> Sean: Yeah, so have I. I've got fucking [lectures] first thing, but I'm still 'ere. I might just stay in bed to be honest.
> Gary: So how much did he have to drink?
> Daniel: I dunno, do I? Same as the rest of us, I suppose.
> Sean: [*In a mockingly effeminate voice*] Ooh, big fucking drinker, then [*everyone laughs*].

Like Andrew, both Gavin and Brad displayed subordinated masculinities in that they did not, or could not, conform to the values of heavy drinking among the team. Gavin, as a result, became the centre of a collective joke – the means of temporary entertainment for the other men, which worked to subordinate and distance him from the collective masculinity of the team (and, thus, protecting that masculine repute) and simultaneously celebrate and masculinise the hegemonic ability of the other players to 'hold their alcohol'. For the men at BCUC, this ability was a major feature of their perceived superiority over, and separation from, women and subordinated male groups. In the case of both Gavin and Brad, one of the first questions of the other men was concerned with the quantity of alcohol consumed, highlighting the perceived importance of this in establishing masculinity. Brad, unlike Gavin, was subjected to the process of subordination and demasculinisation in his absence. Sean was the main precursor in this process, inflating his own masculine identity through a direct comparison between his ability to drink and to stay out late and that of Brad. The fact that Sean also deliberately adopted an effeminate voice in his castigation of Brad, and that Gavin was labelled a 'woman' by more than one of the players, suggests a wider agenda of the subordination of women. Indeed, messages about hegemonic masculinity render inferior both femininity in all its forms and all non-hegemonic forms of masculinity (see also Bryson, 1990; Connell, 1995).

The consumption of alcohol, then, was a primary site for the acquisition of hegemonic masculinity. It was a site, however, that was thwarted with danger for the football players, as they walked a fine line between the hegemonic masculine ability to 'drink hard' and the risk of becoming 'feminised' by the consequences of this practice. These processes of masculinisation and feminisation were not always completely lucid. They were, rather, complex, transitory and historically interchangeable. That is to say, vomiting, passing out and/or needing to go home early were rendered feminine at the time that they occurred – and the men in question were subordinated as such – but over time they became stories that were told freely by the men and with a certain air of machismo. Recollections of passing out or vomiting due to excessive alcohol proclaimed a sense of 'laddishness' in which most of the players were keen to invest. Stories of this kind were used to pass much of the early, 'sober' periods of time on a Wednesday night. One player from another BCUC team, Ronnie, was particularly revered by the men, frequently referred to as a 'legend' and 'wild man' because of his infamous exploits with alcohol. This transposability of the language of 'masculine' and 'feminine' highlights a noticeable gap in critical feminist theories of masculinity. Connell (1987a, 1995), for example, rightly conveys the dynamic disposition of masculinity in time – the historical mobility of gender relations and the subsequent change in stance and objective of hegemonic patterns. But this cannot account for such interchangeability of perceptions of masculinity over a relatively short period of time. That hegemonic masculinity is inherently contradictory – invariably connected to a specific context (see especially Connell, 1990) – also falls short of providing an adequate explanation, because the context within which this adjustment in perspective occurred is unchanged. Utilising theories of hegemony, one might suggest that, while the act of vomiting or passing out carried with it a level of emasculating humiliation, the capacity to talk and joke about it later may have demonstrated a perceived cultural difference between men and women and, thus, supported the hegemonic cause. But, moreover, one may consider the bearing of nostalgia in gendered discourse and the tendency to forget the nuances of an experience and, rather, remember the experience more generally. In this sense, the public humiliation and that momentary sign of weakness that came with sickness and temporary disability

may have been the only 'unmasculine' aspects of alcohol-related illness and over time, therefore, these occurrences came to be seen as thoroughly masculine.

Drinking Range: Selection, Games and Contests

Drink selection was also part of an image construction process for the players. Contrary to what masculine stereotypes may suggest, 'Alco-pops' and fruity cocktails were not necessarily perceived to be 'feminine'. But, these were drinks for later in evening – the last of a 'three-stage' drinking process. The first stage routinely involved drinking at least four pints of something. Lager was the commonly accepted beverage, cider was also acceptable, but bitter or ale was considered an 'old man's drink' and, given that older men are often subordinated in hegemonic struggles (Connell, 1995; Thompson, 1998), was not considered appropriate or masculine. At the top of the drinks hierarchy was 'Snakebite and Black' (a cocktail of lager, cider and black-current cordial in a pint glass). While other pints that had been diluted with something non-alcoholic (e.g. lager and lime, lager and lemonade-'top') were often scoffed at and ridiculed as 'girl's drinks', Snakebite created a wholly different image. It was generally reserved for an occasion, such as for one of the players' birthdays, for the 'man-of-the-match', or as a form of punishment for the 'dick-of-the-day', all of whom were expected to down the pint in one go.

Snakebite had a reputation as a drink that 'gets you pissed quickly' and, in the main, was reserved for ceremonial use, as a public display of maleness. On occasion, some of the players would select it in a more routine drinking milieu, and this was taken as a sign that that particular player was 'up for it' (wishing to get very drunk) that night. This was often seen, and perhaps intended, as a challenge to the other men, to also get 'absolutely wankered' – the favoured turn of phrase amongst the men, referring to the result of excessive drinking (drunkenness). The allusion to masturbation in drinking rhetoric may in itself locate the consumption of alcohol firmly in the male sphere and reinforce correlations between drinking and masculinity. Moreover, in most cases, at least one other player (usually more) would accept the 'challenge' and also order a pint of Snakebite, to 'prove' his masculine identity. The 'crisis tendencies' that are inherent to hegemonic masculinity because of the mobility of gender relations and

gendered power (see Connell, 1995), may often create a sense of insecurity among men and a perpetual need to defend and confirm one's place in the gender order. In this sense, all challenges (such as a drinking challenge) comprise a certain compulsion to undertake, to proclaim one's worthiness to harvest the patriarchal dividend and (re)negotiate masculine positional identity. A great many researchers and commentators have, in the past, alluded to (though rarely stated) a need for competition among men in the construction and prolongation of men's friendships (see for example Farrell, 1975; Rubin, 1983; Walker, 1994; Whitehead, 2002). At BCUC, this competition was endemic; visible in the mêlée for a place on the team and to be the best on the team (see also Messner, 1992), in the everyday sub-cultural pursuits of the players, and in routine discourse concerning such diverse topics as academic achievement and sexual conquests. To have more, to have done more, and to have the capacity to do more were highly valued qualities, which dictated the players' position within the team's gender regime. In sport, and in male friendship, as Lasch (1979) has pointed out previously, a cult of teamwork and fraternity conceals the struggle for survival in an explicitly 'rule' bound milieu.

The second phase of drinking protocol at BCUC comprised the consumption of spirits, neat or with a mixer (mixed with a soft drink, such as cola, lemonade, or tonic water). The rationale behind drinking spirits seemed to differ markedly to that of drinking pints. With the exception of those players that would, on occasion, drink Snakebite from the off, the consumption of pints (lager and cider) was presumed to establish a base for the evening's merriment, providing something of a 'calm before the storm'.

> We all drink like beer or cider or something like that, 'cus it's just kind of a social drink, if you know what I mean? Like, when we're all sober and just wanna sit around and talk, tell each other stuff, tell a few stories and stuff. [...] After a few pints, though, we kind of start thinking about getting pissed [*laughs*]. So then I drink JD [*Jack Daniels*] and Coke... actually a lot of the guys drink that, and some drink like vodka and Coke, or... well, that's about it really. Unless we're doing drinking games or challenges or something... then we drink it neat or do some After-Shocks [*a spicy drink with a high alcohol content*] or something.

(Gary)

Pints, then, were reserved for sociability – a common drinking activity that was central to group cohesion. The consumption of lager or cider provided a collective activity, within which male bonding and a certain level of intimacy was acceptable. Outside of this 'pint-drinking circle', however, the same level of intimacy may be less appropriate. Issues concerning friendship and intimacy among the players are considered later in this chapter and, therefore, it is not my intention to pursue this line of investigation here, other than to note that the collective drinking of lager and cider, in particular, provided a 'safe' environment for male intimacy. The consumption of spirits, in the main, served an altogether different function. Here, the primary purpose of drinking was to get drunk. In this sense, drinking spirits may be viewed as an individual, rather than collective, activity, seeking personal pleasure and satisfying more particularised goals, such as artificial, temporary happiness and confidence. But, even here, consumption of alcohol maintained an association with feelings of companionship with and connectedness to one's company (see also Gough and Edwards, 1998), and, moreover, was concerned with a collective masculine guise and the negotiation of individual positional identity. As Landrine *et al* (1988: 705) have suggested, 'drunkenness may be an aspect of the concept of masculinity', separating men from women and 'other' men. The consumption of alcohol, in general, at BCUC, was a potent resource for the enactment of masculine identity, and, furthermore, the supposition that spirits were more intoxicating than other drinks exaggerated the significance of their use in the construction of individual and collective machismo.

The men consumed spirits in a more social manner also. As beer was an aid in male bonding, providing a commonality and accompaniment to conversation and interaction, spirits also presented an opportunity for collective displays of maleness. Drinking games and drinking challenges were a common feature, usually around the mid-point of the night out, when inebriation was beginning to set in. Drinking challenges tended to take two forms. The first, as has already been discussed with regard to Snakebite, was an unspoken, subconscious pressure to match the drinking exploits of peers. The second was a more direct and

formatted challenge, a drink-for-drink contest between two or more men to find out who could drink the most. The two modes of challenge are not entirely dissimilar, in that both are motivated by subliminal feelings of inadequacy and desires for belonging and pre-eminence that are associated with hegemonic masculinity. That is to say, masculinity compels men to conform and to give up other feelings and misgivings in an attempt to become accepted (Connell, 1987a; Kaufman, 1994). The principal difference between the two forms of challenge is that the more direct contest specifically involved the consumption of spirits, and over a short period of time. The rules of the challenge were uncomplicated: line up the specified number and type of drink on the table (usually five or six tequilas or After-Shocks) and, on the count of three, knock-back the first, then the second, and so on. The winner was the man who managed to drink all his 'shots' in the fastest time, but more important than speed was simply to finish all the shots without waning. An inability to complete the row of drinks, or excessive pausing between drinks, was treated as 'unmasculine' and met with demasculinising, misogynistic or homophobic taunts from team-mates.

Once again this evidences a palpable relationship between drinking and hegemonic masculinity, and a two-pronged cultural message about gendered power (see Bryson, 1990; Humberstone, 2002) – celebrating dominant conceptualisations of manliness and simultaneously inferiorising the 'other'. The ability to drink was not only favoured among the players, but expected as a fundamental quality of 'true' manliness. Moreover, the rich vocabulary of misogyny and homophobia that accompanied failure in drinking contests (labels of 'pussy', 'woman', 'queer') again suggests that heavy drinking was an activity that separated men from women and from subordinated masculine groups. And the language itself is clearly inferiorising, perhaps used to create distance between hegemonic (heterosexual) self- and collective-image and subordinated groups, such as women and homosexual men (see also Curry, 1991; Gough and Edwards, 1998).

Another common feature of Wednesday night carousing was drinking games, which were a far more relaxed affair than drinking contests, on the surface, at least, associated more with fun and playful togetherness than image construction.

But, importantly, they were also another excuse for further consumption of alcohol and, as I will disclose later in this chapter, produced a collective image of raucousness. Typically, drinking games would involve all of the men buying a double- or triple-short of their choice (a double or triple measure of a spirit and a mixer) in a tall glass – essentially, a drink more potent than beer, and plenty of it! The game itself was generally made-up in the spur of the moment by one of the men, who would then explain the rules to the others. Given that most of the players were usually somewhat inebriated by this stage, the rules were frequently misunderstood – or were just plain nonsensical to begin with – and many of the games simply didn't work! This only ever added to the gaiety of the moment, however, which, after all, was the principal reasoning behind playing. One game that did seem to work (and, therefore, if for no other reason, became popular among the players) was to listen to the song that was playing in the background (at the Union) and, upon being pointed at by a designated player, sing the next two lines. Not knowing the words or making a muddle of them would result in the player having to drink a certain measure of their beverage. Successfully singing the next two lines would earn the player the right to choose the next man to sing, as well as avoiding having to drink. At a glance, an activity that, in its very design, required successful gamers to drink as little as possible would seem to be the antithesis of the drinking/masculinity equation common to the milieu. This particular irony seemed lost on the men, or at least they didn't seem to care. Indeed, as noted above, bonding through jocularity, above all else, appeared to provide the rationale for this activity, and, furthermore, each player, regardless of the game's outcome, would ultimately consume the pre-purchased double or triple measure of spirit. Thus, drinking games were just another (organised) facet of the collective's prerequisite of (excessive) alcohol consumption, which was the mainstay of the construction of hegemonic masculinity in the BCUC football sub-culture.

The final phase of the three-stage drinking process for the men was, unlike the previous two stages, entirely optional. In many environments, given each man and woman's right to free choice, all drinking alternatives may be acceptable. But the hegemonic project rife in the life-world of the BCUC football players dictated, quite explicitly, that appropriate drinking behaviour involved drinking pints of

lager or cider, and then moving on to spirits such as Jack Daniels or vodka. Later in the evening, however, no such 'rules' seemed to apply. Some of the men would continue to drink 'shorts' (spirits with mixers) or neat spirits, some would revert back to drinking beer, and some would choose to drink alcoholic fruit drinks. In wider society, the latter tends to be associated with women, taking over the position that Babycham once held in the marketplace as a more stylish, feminine alternative to other alcoholic drinks. Advertising campaigns for brand name drinks such as Hooch, Reef and Bacardi Breezer have, in the main, been directed at women, though, it should be noted, Smirnoff Ice and WKD have broken that pattern in more recent times.

Late in the evening, the team would leave the seating area of the Union and head for the dance floor. With this change of location, the players would often go their separate ways, breaking into smaller groups, or spending time with other friends or their girlfriends. Although the players would still routinely meet up every now and then for the remainder of the night, it became easy for them to get lost in the crowd, which may partially explain the apparent leniency in the dominant drinking protocol. Alco-pops are often viewed as being 'easier' to drink than their alternatives, with the fruit flavour almost completely concealing the taste of alcohol, producing a false sense of refreshment and hydration. It is likely that this particular attribute, in part, constructs the 'feminine' repute of the drinks, and is why some of the men chose to buy these rather than beer or spirits towards the end of the night. And, away from the core group, any risk of being subordinated and branded 'unmanly' as a result was minimised. Indeed, in viewing masculinity as collective practice (see especially Connell, 1995), hegemonic masculine patterns are not necessarily tangible when the group is disseminated and, likewise, individual practice of these patterns may have little meaning.

The continued consumption of alcohol, in some form, however, remained important for individual image construction, both internal and external to the group. As Steve asserted:

> Nah, I keep drinking all night. You see, like, some people, some girls and... and others, they like start drinking water as soon as

> they start feeling just a little bit pissed. I mean, what's that about [*laughs*]? I mean, I don't... 'cus I work some nights, and I've got early lectures some days and things like that, I don't get much opportunity to go out and get wankered, so when I do... well... it's full on, all the way. That's what guys... well I'd hope that that's what guys do. It's what they should do, even though I know some don't. [...] You'd get a lot of shit from the other guys [*football players*] if you got caught drinking water.
>
> (Steve)

Steve demonstrated a commitment, here, to the hegemonic notion that the capacity to 'drink big' and hold one's alcohol partially defined 'real' men's superiority over and separation from women and subordinated male groups. His comments also confirmed my observations that this was the wider philosophy of the team, an identity imperative that gelled the collective sub-cultural pursuits of the players. The close association between alcohol and the football world cannot be understated. Beer manufacturers tend to be among the most prominent of all the football sponsors, and at all levels of competition, from amateur Sunday League to the professional game, the most common post-match activity is to go out and have a few beers 'with the boys'. As Messner (1992) points out, however, the social sciences are still unclear as to whether or not athletes drink more, and more often, or use any form of recreational drug more than those in the general population. Indeed, this alcohol-bound sub-culture among the BCUC football players is, perhaps, as much aligned with English student 'fashionable promiscuity' culture as it is with the sportsworld (see Harris and Ide, 2000).

Generosity

Generosity as a mark of manliness, particularly in the sense of spending money on male friends, buying a round of drinks and the like, is rarely considered in the existing literature about men's friendships and male sporting sub-cultures. A notable exception is Hughson's (2000) ethnography of the *Bad Blue Boys*, a group of Croatian-Australian football supporters, but here, Hughson claims, generosity is a trait of Croatian cultural tradition, rather than a sports tradition or facet of male interaction. While that may be, generosity with drinks was also a core trait of the BCUC football players, as well as the other male sports teams at the Union on a Wednesday night. It did not, however, appear to be a feature of the women's teams' sub-cultures, where buying your own drinks was preferred. Clearly, then,

'shouting' (paying for) a round was a highly valued gesture among collegiate sportsmen, and another mark of one's manhood.

The first drink of the evening, as noted earlier, was purchased on arrival at the Union, before joining the group. Drinks for the purpose of drinking games and drinking challenges were also the responsibility of each individual man, and when the team disseminated later in the night it became difficult, if not impossible, to buy a round. All other drinks, however, were expected to be bought in rounds, with each player taking his turn to buy for the rest. This flagrant exhibition of 'cash to spare' (Parker, 1996c) may be linked to notions of conspicuous consumption, where the demonstration of wealth implies consumptive power, which, in turn, establishes masculine prowess and reputation (see Clayton *et* al, 2004; Parker, 1996c). In a student milieu, however, where relative poverty marks and limits consumption and lifestyle choices, to not have money was not considered to be unmasculine. Indeed, on occasion, some of the men were unable to afford a round of drinks and, while these individuals were excluded from subsequent rounds, they were not ostracized for their lack of cash.

But, in the event of avoiding buying a round without declaring fiscal inability, players were quickly and publicly labelled as 'tight' (unwilling to spend money). While such a label is not overtly demasculinising, it was nonetheless subordinating, and was intended and received as an extreme insult. It is feasible to draw parallels between notions of hegemonic masculinity and the male sex role and, in this sense, avoiding buying a round may be viewed as an elusion of one's 'instrumental' duty (see Parsons and Bales, 1953). That is to say, the male role as provider may extend further than the matrimonial family and, rather, imply provision (or an equal share in the provision) for the male fraternity as 'family'. In patriarchal discourse, which hegemony strives to legitimate and preserve, the power to procure and provide is a cultural difference between men and women and, by way of generosity being almost exclusively a feature of BCUC's male, rather than female, sports subculture, it is a trait that partially defines a masculine image. Thus, avoidance or unwillingness was assumed to be characteristic of the 'other' and subsequently subordinated as inappropriate gendered practice.

Unruliness

The hard drinking culture among the players at BCUC went hand-in-hand with a collective vociferous façade. Quiet drinking and low-level conversation was rare, and the more alcohol that was consumed the louder and more obtrusive the men's behaviour became. In the main, this behaviour was kept within the group and was relatively inoffensive: shouting to each other, chanting, boisterous singing and the like. The sheer volume of such seemingly fun and innocent behaviour, however, meant that the players could be heard all over the Union (over and above the already loud music and chatter of other student groups) and, considering the content of some of the songs, in particular, causing offence was certainly possible.

Among the more popular songs was *Three German Officers*, which was about three German soldiers coming to England and raping women. An upbeat and catchy tune disguised the grimly hegemonic masculinised theme, as the lyrics graphically described the three men 'fucking' a young woman to death, and then 'fucking' her back to life again. Seidler (1997) has suggested that the influence of male hegemony has left many men feeling insecure about their maleness and sexuality and, following on from this point, a number of feminist and pro-feminist writers have noted the strong connection between this insecurity, male bonding, and the physical and verbal oppression of women (see for example Whitehead, 2002). Some have referred to this as 'rape culture' (Beneke, 1982; Herman, 1984; Sanday, 1981), which is strongly affiliated with hegemonic masculinity and, specifically, the expression of (aggressive) patriarchal power (see Connell, 1995). Rape culture, as Whitehead (2002: 165) connotes, is 'at the heart of masculinity, a (hetero)sexist treatment of women that posits them as sexual objects to be used and abused for male gratification'. Although, in the case of the BCUC football players' song, this oppression was only verbal, Messner (1992) has expressed concern over the fine line between engaging in aggressively sexualised views of women in male sport cultures and undertaking actual aggression (see also Crosset, 2000).

I am not suggesting that the men I observed were involved in physical aggression or violence towards women, but the general unruliness of the players would sometimes go beyond the highly sexualised discourse discussed above. On one

occasion some of the players removed their underwear and then ran around the Union, whirling their boxer-shorts above their heads before thrusting them in the faces of the nearest women. Other activities, however, were more sexually explicit:

> A: The whole team were drunk and we went up to different girls and grab one of her legs and... they call it a Jack Russell. I'm not sure if you've heard that term before? It's like when a dog is humping someone's leg. They wanted me to do that, but... no way.
>
> *BC: So what happened when you refused?*
>
> A: Nothing really. I got all the usual stuff like... well, some of the guys were like, 'are you scared of women?', kind of thing, and like calling me gay or a virgin or something. But, you know, it's nothing really... just lad's banter, I d say.
>
> (Andrew)

Over the course of the data collection period, never once did I actually observe the 'Jack Russell', but the very fact that this activity had been given a name suggested that it was a regular occurrence. Moreover, Andrew was not the only player to speak of this, with some of the players noting it to be something of a 'trademark' of the football team, a 'laddish' activity that all players were expected (and, in most cases, keen) to participate in. The peer-group pressure in rape cultures, such as the (hetero)sexualised collegiate football realm, occurs in a context in which women are objectified and subjugated. The 'humping' of women's legs, while not excessively violent in itself, is clearly symbolic of men's sexual violence towards women to sustain their dominance. The intimidation of women, as Connell (1995) notes, ranges across the spectrum from wolf-whistling, to sexual harassment, to rape and domestic assault. But all such acts are fuelled by, and do the bidding for, the hegemonic project and, as such, are felt to be entirely justified by many of the players, authorised by an ideology of supremacy. Furthermore, execution of the 'Jack Russell', by way of its affiliations with male hegemony and heterosexuality, was also seen as another sign of one's manhood. As Andrew noted, refusal to join in was met with subordinating rhetoric, accusations of homosexuality or, equally demasculinising, virginity.

Not all unruly and vociferous behaviour was aimed at women. Shouting across the Union to friends or other players was generally preferred to face-to-face conversation. Food fights, when food was available, were common. As was, later in the evening, jumping up and down moronically on tables and on the stage of the dance floor (an area that was claimed by the football teams when dancing was to be done). In the main, the Student Union security staff tolerated these activities, though a quiet word in the ear of the some of the players was occasionally needed. Indeed, the sheer number of male football players (five teams) compared to other athletes and non-sporting students, made them the Union's best customers on a Wednesday night. As such, they were usually left alone without action against them being taken.

In opportunistic conversations with some of my students (both male and female), it was suggested that many people steered clear of the Union on this particular night of week, specifically because of the football players' boisterous behaviour and territorialism. But many also noted that they knew, liked, and were friends with a lot of the players. This again is suggestive of a collective dimension to masculinity (see especially Connell, 1995), whereby the masculinities of the players are very different when together as a team than they are when with other friends. In this sense, while individual practice is required, it is the team that is the bearer of hegemonic masculinity by way of the general unruliness and vociferousness. But, moreover, the operating staff at the Union were also complicit to this masculinity by allowing these behaviours to take place. At another pub or club, these actions might not be tolerated (and, perhaps, not executed in the first place). In some cases, particularly in respect of rituals and ceremonial actions, the Union actively encouraged and aided the development of these masculinities.

Ritual Humiliation

Ritual, as Sabo and Panepinto (1990: 116) define it, is organised action, which 'reproduces the structure and cultural ethos of a community and, at the same time, enables the community to enmesh itself in its own identity'. A ritual can be described as patriarchal when it contains elements of socialisation that promote and express institutionalised patterns of both sex segregation and male dominance

(ibid: 116), as well as hierarchical differentiation among players. Taking this into account, football sub-cultural ritual at BCUC, particularly initiation ritual, was a means for new members to learn (and to remind longer-term members of) the definition of the male situation.

The main initiation ritual at the start of each season applied to all new players in all five of the University College's teams, and would occur on a Wednesday night at the Union.

> The new members of the team were supposed to strip naked in front of everyone on the stage, drink... er... well what I did was drink an After-Shock, and I had a pint to down in one. Some of the guys who did it before do it again as well, just for a laugh. [...] When I first heard about it, I thought, 'I don't wanna do that... I'm not doing that'. I thought to myself, 'I don't wanna embarrass myself, and step up on the stage'. But I had no choice, so I went up there and just did it.
>
> (Andrew)

> No-one really wants to do it, but you've gotta. You've gotta strip and dance on the stage, down a few drinks, and that. It's not fun! I hated it, 'cus there's just, like, thousands of people looking at you, and... well I'm quite skinny and everyone was taking the piss. It was the worst moment of my life... no contest.
>
> (Gary)

> Oh, yeah, I remember my initiation. You've gotta, like, get your kit off in front of everyone and knock back a few drinks. I was dreading it before, like, but once I was up there it was kind of a laugh.
>
> (Sean)

This initiation had become ceremonial not just for the football players, but also for all of the university college's students. It was a night of the year that attracted a large crowd, specifically to see the new initiates strip off and be publicly humiliated. It was even advertised as a calendar night by the Student Union bar and a Union representative on a microphone would gather the crowd from around the club and introduce the event itself. The ritual was primarily designed to humiliate the men 'just for a laugh', specifically by causing them to question and feel anxious about their own masculinity. On the one hand, complying with this

tradition, as Gary (above) suggested, created the potential for a player's masculinity to be questioned if they were not muscularly built. On the other hand, non-compliance would cause team-mates to question their 'gameness' for a laugh, which formed a significant part of the team's masculine guise (see also Parker, 1996c).

It was for this reason, more than any other, that most of the players gave for agreeing to take part in the ritual. As Gary noted:

> You've kind of got to do it to try and earn their [*the team's*] respect first of all, especially because you're new and don't really know anyone. Everyone does it... it's like the rule, so by doing it you kind of fit in straight away. If you don't do it... like, 'cus some of the guys refused, they were thought of as, like... kind of like boring and unfunny.
>
> (Gary)

To not be funny or to be seen as too decorous or restrained, then, were subordinated masculinities in the BCUC football milieu. Because this was a ritual that reached across the spectrum of the university college's football teams, to refuse to take part was also seen to be letting down your particular team. Given the value placed upon raucousness and general hedonism in the team, which formed a significant part of the milieu's hegemonic masculinity, non-compliance with this ritual may have also been harmful to the perceived collective masculinity. For this reason, those players that refused to strip-off were consequently punished, usually by way of a practical joke of some kind. A laxative in their drink, or an insulting sign (such as 'wanker' or 'queer') unknowingly stuck to their back were favourite methods of punishment and redemption. Again, the ability to 'take' these pranks was all a part of the process of being accepted and establishing one's positional masculine identity.

Other rituals were less degrading to the players, but still involved a degree of embarrassment. After every game, Daniel nominated a player for man-of-the-match, and, amongst themselves, the players nominated a 'dick-of-the-day'. The reward/punishment for these two accolades was the same, to stand on a chair and 'down' a pint of Snakebite in one. The player's names were announced on the

microphone, to be sure that everyone in the vicinity was watching. Like the pre-season initiation ritual, the prime intention was to make the men feel uncomfortable, but was also connected to the 'big drinking' culture in which the team were keen to invest and publicly exhibit:

> We just do it for a laugh, kind of thing. Like, make sure as many people as possible is watching and make them, like, stand up their in full view and neck a pint... and it's to kind of see if they can actually do it, but it's only a pint, so, obviously, they all can [*laughs*].
>
> (Daniel)

> So you're up on chairs so that everyone can see you while... it's kind of public humiliation, I guess, even for, like, the man-of-the-match, even though he's, like, done well that day. It's just kind of a laugh... to, like, humiliate someone in that way. It's funny.
>
> (Michael)

The dick-of-the-day ritual differed slightly from that of the man-of-the-match, in that he would have to 'down' his pint while stood next to a member of the women's football team, who would also down a pint (though usually not of Snakebite). This created added potential for humiliation and demasculinisation, as Steve explained:

> I mean, downing a pint is pretty easy, really... unless you've already had an extraordinary amount to drink. But the dick-of-the-day has got to do it faster than the girls, otherwise... well, you can't be out-matched by a woman in a drinking contest [*laughs*]. I mean, come on! But some of these girls, the football girls... some of them are big girls and can really, really drink. I've never seen anything like it!
>
> (Steve)

Unlike the all-male drinking contests described earlier, when matched against a woman, emphasis was placed upon being faster than the opponent, as well as finishing the drink in one go. Because capacity to drink was the decisive dynamic of 'true' masculinity in BCUC football's carousing context, to 'lose to a girl' was the ultimate malfunction in male/female differentiation patterns and, thus, demasculinising. Indeed, particularly among young boys, but also continuing into adulthood, subordinating language is regularly characterised by derogatory

comparisons to the opposite sex (see for example Connell, 2002; Humberstone, 2002).

While, to my knowledge, none of the players ever lost this drinking challenge, that their very manhood was at stake was enough to create some nervousness. It was this anxiety factor that differentiated between the man-of-the-match 'celebration' and the dick-of-the-day 'punishment'. Both rituals, however, communicated similar ideological messages about men and masculinity. They were concerned with publicly demonstrating a capacity to drink alcohol, which, in itself, was a hegemonic masculine denominator, separating men from women, and from other men. Moreover, though, the men were (literally) placed on pedestals and valorised by the accompaniment of glorifying chants, songs, banging on tables and cheers as they 'downed' their pint. Sabo and Jansen (1992: 174) evidence a similar scenario in the sports media, where visual portrayals of male athletes are 'framed from the ground up, [...] cast against soundtracks of roaring crowds or musical fanfares replete with throbbing bass or thundering drums'. Women athletes are rarely granted this same 'lionising' treatment. Indeed, during the 'dick-of-the-day' ritual, once the male participant had finished his pint of Snakebite, the cheers of support were silenced and the crowd's attention waned, even though the female player was often still drinking.

Here it is clear to see that masculinities were constructed by reason of the players' perceptions of femininity – being better and more central to the routine processes of both sport and student drinking culture than women were. Even though a woman football player was involved in this ritual, it was the male game that was celebrated. The woman was merely a component of this celebration, providing the 'dick-of-the-day' with a (feminine) drinking benchmark, which had to be surpassed to preserve his masculine identity and to sustain the hegemonic project.

Fighting

Curry (1998) states that campus bars are regularly settings for aggression where fighting is a habitual problem, predominantly as an instrument to assert 'ownership' of the bar by athletes. At BCUC, while ownership and fierce territorialism was a feature of the football subculture, this was not realised

through actual violence. It was, rather, achieved by way of the sheer size of the football collective, the Union's staunch provision for and leniency toward football players' behaviours, and the general vociferousness of their carousing. Even players such as Alex, Sean and Steve, who were highly aggressive on the pitch, 'sketching' and provoking opposition players at every opportunity, and even pushing them and grabbing them by the collar or throat, did not carry this demeanour into the carousing context. Indeed, the men's attitudes about starting fights were very clear:

> I know the way we are sometimes can, like, get in people's faces [*annoy people*] a bit, but that's just the way we are. We're having a good time and none of the lads want to stir up a fight or nothing. [...] There are a lot of twats down the Union and that, that will just try and start a fight with us for nothing... 'cus we're making too much noise, or having too good a time, or whatever. I think those guys are just thick or something!
>
> (Daniel)

> I mean, there's, like, those types of guys that just kick-off for no reason whatsoever... they're just twats. There's no need for it whatsoever. I don't get why people can't just go out and have a good laugh without fucking starting on everyone around them. I hate that!
>
> (Steve)

These attitudes were shared by all of the men, but fights had occurred in the past, usually between football and rugby players. On these occasions, however (or at least so the football players claimed), the rugby players started the fights. Indeed, the men's apparent anti-fighting values really came down to a philosophy of not starting fights. This was what 'twats' did – an insult that distanced the players from fight instigators and marginalised fight starting as an inappropriate display of masculinity.

Fighting, though, was authorised by the brand of hegemonic masculinity evident among the football players, but only as a response to the hostility of others. In fact, to try and avoid a fight was a sign of weakness and lack of courage. Willingness and an ability to fight, if necessary, were traits of a positive, hegemonic masculine identity. This much, at least, was evidenced by the position 'fighting talk' was given in everyday rhetoric, where anecdotal tales about past

fights were common. These stories were not of gratuitous actions or excessive and sombre violence. They were, rather, autobiographical accounts (or sometimes biographical) of 'heroic' deeds – of standing-up to the 'twats' for 'all that is good and right'. One man's story would usually begin a chain, each boasting of his 'macho' exploits so as not to lose face.

The act of starting a fight, then, was ostracised as a trait of marginalised groups of men, such as the rugby players or 'thick' men. But the ability to fight, itself, was highly valued – a hegemonic masculine characteristic in which all of the men seemed keen to invest. As Connell (1995) suggests, violence is particularly important in gender politics among men, as a method of claiming power and asserting masculinity in group struggles. For the BCUC football players, though, a perception of this power was preferred – a conveyance of an image of 'hardness' and an ability to fight and win if needs be – as opposed to the actual use of violence.

The importance of this image to the players once again supports Connell's (1995) conceptualisation of a collective dimension to masculinity. That is to say, the 'hard man' image is unlikely to be promoted outside of the football milieu, because of the risk of being marginalised as anti-social or even criminal. The very fact that none of these players appeared to be violent men suggests that they would have no wish to be viewed as violent by, for instance, their family members or lecturers. Indeed, it is hard to imagine tales of fighting and aggravation (even if it had been heroic and righteous) being exchanged over a family Christmas dinner, but in the collegiate football milieu this image was representative of the hegemonic project.

Friendship, Sex and (Hetero)sexuality

One of the more important findings of contemporary research into men's same-sex friendships is that the nature of these relationships tends to support male hegemony, rather than provide possibilities for social transformations between women and men (see especially Seidler, 1997). That is to say, men's friendships with other men can be seen as crucially important in sustaining masculine subjectivities and men's sense of identity as men (Whitehead, 2002). Central to

this notion, many sociologists have claimed, is the conflicting tensions over sexuality and questions about homosexuality, which are inevitably introduced when men demonstrate intimacy with other men (see Messner, 2002; Seidler, 1997; Swain, 1992; Walker, 1994; Whitehead, 2002).

As Connell (1995) notes, homophobia is a classic barrier to friendships among heterosexual men. But it is not an insurmountable barrier in that this intense fear of being branded as gay induces a defensive hegemonic heterosexual culture, which is principally defined by the centrality of a (non-intimate) activity, and (hetero)sexist and homophobic discourses and practices. This philosophy was reflected in the bond of the men in the BCUC football team, where friendship was cemented by way of masculinised, competitive actions, (hetero)sexist talk and pursuit, and an innate fear of homophobic stigmatisation. Such friendships, while demonstrating (or even disguising) a particular kind of intimacy, play a part in the construction of a wider gender order in which men's power over women is reasserted (see also Messner, 1992).

Men's Friendships and the Construction of Hegemonic Masculinity

Friendships that were developed through playing football together were the strongest of all the same-sex relationships for the men at BCUC. Leisure pursuits during term-time were almost always shared with other members of the University College team and some of the men even shared a house, having moved in together at the end of their first year. Despite this, however, few of the players considered these friendships to be 'close', with many making direct comparisons with same-sex friendships 'back home'. These latter relationships (many of which were also built on a shared interest in football) were spoken of with a sense of genuineness – 'real' friendships that were developed over a long period of time and associated with, and authenticated by, a knowledge of a friend's life. Term-time friendships with team-mates, on the other hand, were not 'close' in this sense:

> We [*BCUC football players*] have a kind of togetherness... you have to develop a kind of togetherness. I mean, even if you don't get on with them that well, when you're on the pitch you get on with them, and you make an effort to get on with them

> when we go out. I've got a lot of good friends from football here. They're not my best friends, but they are my best friends here, if you know what I mean? I doubt I'll stay in contact with any of them, 'cus I hardly know them really... not *really* know them, anyway.
>
> (Gary)

> They're [*team-mates*] all good mates and we all have a good laugh when we go out and stuff. But, obviously, within the team, you'll get to know people that you might not have known otherwise, and not bothered with generally, so you're just mates because of the football and are kind of forced together. But, you know, I like all the lads and get on with them, but they're not life-long friends like my mates back home. With them [*friends 'back home'*], we like tell each other stuff and know each other really well. It ain't really like that here.
>
> (Richard)

These comments typified those of all of the players that were interviewed, connoting friendships that were provisional and in no way intimate or close. This is not to say that they were mere acquaintances. Far from it. The men were very comfortable in each others company and spent a lot of time together, meeting up during lunch and mid-session breaks during the day, gathering at each others houses on days off, and going out in the evenings. They would also confide in each other about problems with assignments, and team-up as 'study-buddies' and the like. But this was habitually as far as 'confessions' about personal lives and problems went, and as far involved in these problems as other men wished to become.

Instead, time spent together was dominated by the pursuit of and/or discourse about football, humour, alcohol related pleasure, and women. It was through these activities (some of which have already been discussed in this chapter and in chapter nine) that the men's relationships with each other were founded, developed and cemented. While none of this, for the men at BCUC, added up to a 'close' friendship, it does reflect the archetypical men's same-sex relationship described by many pro-feminist writers. Rubin (1983, 1985), for example, has argued that men tend to place a high value on spending time with other men, but distance themselves from any form of intimacy by organising this time around an activity that is 'external' to themselves (see also Brandth and Kvande, 1998).

Further to this, Walker (1994) has argued that men use jokes and (sexist) talk about women as 'pseudo-instrumental' reasons to engage in conversation with other men when, frequently, 'instrumental' reasons may be considered too intimate.

Within this theoretical frame, the construction of hegemonic masculinity in the BCUC football players' friendships becomes clearer. The deep fear of intimacy, itself, reflects a fear of being branded as gay and, thus, subordinates gay men as something 'unnatural' (Connell, 1995, 2002). Moreover, this fear creates a culture loaded with homophobic and heterosexist discourse, as some kind of defensive mechanism against homosexual labels (Connell, 1995). Football provided a 'safe' raison d'être for a tight friendship with other men (see also Messner, 1992), and drinking and carousing presented an equally 'safe' milieu for the development of this friendship. This was a friendship defined largely by the perpetual use of jocularity, ranging from the telling of actual jokes (usually sexist or homophobic in nature) to 'taking the piss' out of each other. The latter was frequently designed around a demasculinising process of homosexual inference, usually consisting of snappy 'one-liners' and quick 'comebacks'. One such incident occurred in the changing room after a match, when Gavin produced a towel decorated with a flowered pattern:

> Alex: What's that?
> Gavin: It's a fucking towel. What's it look like?
> Sean: It's real beautiful, that, flower-boy [*laughter*]?
> Alex: Flower-boy the batty-boy! D'ya stitch it all yourself in batty-boy class [*laughter*]?
> Gavin: Nah, I borrowed it off your boyfriend [*laughter*].

Insults, jibes and verbal jousting of this nature were commonplace, particularly in the changing room. 'Batty-boy' was just one of many homophobic labels in the men's everyday vocabulary. The use of such language, according to Gough and Edwards (1998), helps to distance homosexuality, and by doing so, strengthens hegemonic masculinity. Moreover, these homosexual inferences were designed to produce a reaction of some kind. Parker (1996c), in his ethnographic study of professional football apprentices, also identifies verbal 'wind-ups' as a cornerstone of sub-cultural masculinities, where the driving force behind this

humour was to cause team-mates to 'snap' under the pressure. While Parker located this within a context of 'working-class shop-floor humour', rather than the more middle-class environment of Higher Education, here too there was an element of competitiveness in the day-to-day expressions of friendship among the men.

With reference to insults and jibes as characteristic of men's friendships in sporting cultures, Curry (1991) also suggests that competition extends to male athletes' personal relationships. That is to say, 'antagonistic cooperation' (masculinised competition among team-mates to 'out do' each other) is well documented specifically in regard of athletic prowess (see Messner, 1992). But, this competitiveness also extends to other areas of male athletes' relationships (Curry, 1991; De Garis, 2000). In-group struggles to be identified as the funniest, the 'hardest', the most attractive to women, the biggest drinker, partially defined the BCUC men's friendship. This rivalry seemed to cement their relationship, perhaps under the presupposition that friendships characterised by attempts to impose and subordinate preclude intimate sharing and reciprocity, and are, therefore, 'safe' (see De Garis, 2000; Messner, 1992; Rubin, 1983).

Although homophobic labels were the most popular form of subordination of heterosexual team-mates, this disguised a relatively unprejudiced group character. That is to say, the hatred of gay men that has been a core theme of many studies of all-male sub-cultures, culminating in acts of violence such as 'queer bashing' or aggressive, abhorrent discourse (see for example, Connell, 1995; Curry, 1998, 2000), was not reflected in the BCUC players' attitudes. In the relative seclusion of the interview room, at least, most of the men had very little to say on the subject of gay men, purporting an acceptance to and normalisation of homosexuality to the point that it warranted no auxiliary discussion. Those that did make lengthy replies launched into anecdotal stories involving gay friends, in much the same tone as they would discuss heterosexual friends, with little or no mention of, and certainly no relevance attached to these men's sexuality. Homophobia, then, as a dynamic of hegemonic masculinity, was a collective practice, rather an expression of individual prejudices. But, it occupied a central position in the collegiate football culture as symbol of the importance of ones

(hetero)sexuality in the construction of individual masculine identity. Here, then, it reflected a deep fear of homosexuality or, more specifically, a fear of being subordinated and emasculated by way of homophobic labels. In this sense, the derogatory homophobic words utilised in the men's 'wind-ups' did not indicate a resolute affiliation with male hegemony, but they did allow the men to realise the patriarchal dividend by way of distancing themselves from gay, subordinated masculinities. Thus, this type of homophobic rhetoric, in this particular situation, may be viewed as the expression of complicit masculinities – supporting the hegemonic project, without the tensions and implications of being 'frontline troops' (Connell, 1995: 79).

The men also constructed masculinities through their talk about women. In his conceptualising discussions and definitions of hegemonic masculinities, Connell (1989a, 1995; see also Carrigan *et al*, 1987) emphasises the (often oppressive) positioning of women to be of elementary importance. In particular, Connell notes that hegemonic masculinity is, in part, complimented by a feminine character, which he calls 'emphasized femininity'. The dominant form of masculinity is always constructed in relation to various subordinated masculinities, as well as in relation to women. Women, in hegemonic discourses, are positioned as opposite to men, fulfilling a supportive, 'expressive' role (Parsons and Bales, 1953), which often manifests itself in men's rhetoric as 'sexually objectified' or 'eroticised' (see for example Curry, 1991; Gough and Edwards, 1998; Harris and Clayton, 2002; Rutherford, 1988).

Such discourse has come to be pervasive in accounts of athletic sub-cultures where 'women-as-objects' stories (Gough and Edwards, 1998) are identified as omnipresent nuances of male bonding, particularly in the locker room (see for example Curry, 1991; Sabo and Panepinto, 1990). Indeed, among the BCUC football players, (hetero)sexist dialogue, while noticeable in the carousing context, was more discernible in the changing rooms before and after matches. This may be because of the increased risk of homosexual implication when men are changing and showering together, which necessitates a process of bolstering ones heterosexual identity.

Whatever the motive, changing room speak was highly sexualised, inferiorising women as 'other', usually by virtue of biological sex-symbolism – sexploitation – as the following talk fragment demonstrates:

> Steve: [*hums the tune of a Cristina Aguilera song*] I'll tell ya what, that Cristina wants bending over and giving a right seeing to.
> Brad: Shit, yeah.
> Steve: Did ya see 'er in FHM last month?
> Brad: Nah. Did she get 'em [*her breasts*] out, did she?
> Steve: Oh, man, I'm telling ya! She didn't show it all. She kind of had her hair coming down and covering up the nips [*nipples*], but fuck me…
> Brad: [*laughs*] Prick teasing, was it?

Women celebrities were particularly prominent figures in the men's sexually explicit fantasies. As well as featuring in the men's opportunistic and momentary observations, such as that above, these women were also the subject of more 'organised' conversations. Particularly noteworthy was the 'women I'd like to fuck' poll, which was a regular feature of pre- and post-match conversation. This was exactly as it sounds – each man providing a list of celebrity candidates, usually in a specific profession (e.g. sportswomen, actresses, etc.), for the coveted title of 'most fuckable'. The men's nominations would then be open to scrutiny by the others, with breast-size and shape, legs and 'arse', and, less frequently, eyes and face the prime measures of 'fuckability'. Perceived 'dirtiness' in bed was also a factor:

> Alistair: Alright, then, most fuckable supermodels? Go!
> Alex/Steve/Robert: [*simultaneously*] Claudia Schaeffer [*laughter*]!
> Tom: Fuck off with that shit! Naomi Campbell, gotta be!
> Richard: Yeah, but she's s'posed to be a real bitch, though.
> Tom: Yeah, but she'd do anything you want 'er to [*laughter*].
> Alex: And what ya gonna do? She ain't got no tits to play with [*laughter*].
> Richard: None of them 'ave.
> Alex: Fucking Claudia does.
> Steve: Yeah. That's why she's the ultimate… no contest.
> Robert: Kate Moss is alright.
> Alex: Nice arse, no tits.
> Robert: None of them 'ave got any tits!

Alex: [*exasperated*] Fucking Claudia does [*laughter*]! Anyway, that's a bit of a crap one, 'cus none of 'em are that nice really. Kind of funny looking in the face, ain't they [*nods and sounds of agreement*]?
Steve: Yeah, that's true. You wouldn't look twice, probably, if you saw them walking down the street.
Alistair: You saying you wouldn't?
Steve: I dunno, probably would, but... [*interrupted*].
Alex: 'Ave to put a bag over their 'eads [*laughter*].

These debates could often last for several minutes, and would sometimes be resumed later in the night at the Union, or the following week. Celebrity women, however, were not exclusively the topic of heterosexualised discourse. The following two talk fragments were about women that (some of) the men knew personally, but this did not alter the inferiorising, biological/sex objectification theme of the conversations:

Sean: You know Charlotte, don't you? Charlotte Bridge?
Steve: [*Laughs*] Charlotte [*holds his arms out in front of his chest, mimicking large breasts*]?
Sean: [*Laughs*] Yeah, exactly. Fucking 'ell! [*In a more hushed voice*] Imagine the fucking tit-wank you could 'ave there [*laughter*].

Daniel: I thought you copped-off with 'er at end of night.
Steve: Nah, I wasn't much into it. Just went home.
Alex: What, you got 'er into the light and changed your mind [*laughter*]?
Daniel: She was alright. I thought so, anyway.
Andrew: [*In agreement*] Yeah.
Alex: Tits were a bit poodles-ears.
Steve: Poodles-ears?
Alex: Saggy. Cricket ball in a footy sock [*laughter*]. Ugliest norks [*breasts*] I've ever seen, man [*more laughter*]!
Andrew: [*In disgust*] Oh, easy!

The use of such language in male bonding rhetoric reduces women to 'disassociated objects' (Rutherford, 1988), devaluing femininities by highlighting only the biological differences between men and women. That is to say, the depiction of women in the BCUC men's friendship building was purely in terms of disembodied features, most notably the breasts. Often, women were not referred to by name, or even as 'she' or 'her', but as 'it' or 'that'. In this way, the

players marked strong distinctions between femininity and masculinity, the latter of which was portrayed as being much more than the sum of men's physical components. Women as a whole, then, were created a 'role', as an aesthetic or object of sexual desire. Individual women whose biological make-up did not meet the men's standards of exaggeratedly feminine, were inferiorised even further, as ineffective in their 'role' and, therefore, of no value to the men in the construction of their individual masculine identities.

Whether considered attractive or unattractive by the BCUC players, however, that women were judged almost solely by this criterion legitimates and serves the wider hegemonic project. As Gough and Edwards (1998: 422) write, 'the construction of devalued femininities [...] provides an 'other' against which hegemonic masculinities constitute themselves'. The use of this highly (hetero)sexualised language, then, alienates femininity by constructing it purely in the physical, which is taken to guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women (see Connell, 1995).

It should be noted, however, that not all of the men joined in with this talk. Andrew, Gary and Michael, in particular, would rarely enter into heterosexist conversation, but would usually remain a part of the process by way of laughing along with everyone else. In this way, these men were complicit to the hegemonic project, benefiting from the discourse in as much as it secured their privileged position as men (see Connell, 1995) and, more immediately, because they were able to be a part of the male bonding process without being the pioneers of the sexist and misogynistic discourse. On (very rare) occasion, as Andrew did in the last extract, a challenge to the dominant views of the men would be introduced. This was, in fact, the only challenge to this kind of discourse that I witnessed. At a glance, this may be interpreted as a display of marginalised masculinity, a manifestation of distance from hegemonic masculinity, an engagement with resistance (see especially Connell, 1995: 115). But, on closer inspection, Andrew's objection seemed to be to 'an insult too far', rather than to the general tone of the men's jocularity. Andrew, then, remained complicit to the project of patriarchy.

At the heart of the BCUC players' friendship was hegemonic masculinity. Most of the men were keen to reject the notion that these friendships were 'intimate', but they were undoubtedly close – the closest of all their term-time relationships. Underneath this closeness, however, lay a hegemonic masculine code, characterised by internal antagonisms rooted in hierarchy, and an oppressive 'collective' culture of sexism and homophobia. In this sense, the dynamics of the men's friendship corresponds with much of the existing literature about male sporting acquaintances, and men's friendships in general (Messner, 1992; Rubin, 1983, 1985; Rutherford, 1988; Swain, 1992; Whitehead, 2002). Despite this, and the dismissal of the term by the players themselves, the friendships were developed with 'intimacy' of a kind. Research about inter-male relationships is all too often conducted using inter-female relationships as a benchmark for intimacy. Men may show intimacy in very different ways (see especially Walker, 1994). Intimacy among men is often characterised by 'doing' together, sharing an activity that is external to themselves (Brandth and Kvande, 1998; Rubin, 1983), and organised sport is often seen to provide this foundation for friendship and intimacy (Messner, 1992). This may be because the hegemonic masculine, stalwartly heterosexist realm of sport is viewed as a 'safe' environment to develop closeness with other men.

Here, as Messner (1992: 106) asserts, 'we must look at men's friendships in the larger context of structural power relations between men and women, and between men and other men'. That is, the athletic friendship of the BCUC football players was cemented by competition to be the best (at anything), and by sexist and homophobic talk, thus playing a part in the project of patriarchy and in the construction of both a larger gender order and an 'internal' gender regime. While not all of the players presented themselves as leaders in the embodiment of hegemonic masculinities, those that did not remained complicit by way of being a part of, benefiting from, and providing no resistance to, the collective culture. Indeed, as individuals, none of the men appeared to be homophobic in as much as they had no prejudices with regard to gay men. But as a collective culture, the football team valued heterosexuality (and simultaneously subordinated homosexuality with a rich vocabulary of abuse) to the point that conspicuous heterosexual actions were almost compulsory.

Compulsory Heterosexuality

When interviewing the players individually, I asked the question, 'do you discuss your sexual activities with team-mates?' The responses were all the same, but differed in tone. Some of the men somewhat ashamedly admitted that they did. Some answered with a proud and enthusiastic 'yes'. Others launched immediately into stories of their sexual exploits and conquests. These answers all confirmed my field observations, that an active sex-life was a clear indication of one's manhood and, far from being private, was something to be talked about, bragged about, and made patently clear to male peers.

Rich (1980) was among the first feminist authors to write of 'compulsory heterosexuality', naming the cultural and social pressures on women to make themselves available to men, on whatever terms they can get. What needs to be made clear some two decades later is that, as the men at BCUC lay bare, compulsory heterosexuality is also enforced on men (Connell, 1995). This is, however, like all aspects of hegemonic masculinity, a principle of a 'collective practice' of manliness, given more or less importance, or a different criterion of practice altogether, in the collegiate football milieu than in other facets of the men's lives. I have noted elsewhere that women, as girlfriends, wives, or even 'one-night-stands', have a crucial role to play in the construction of professional football players' masculinised media image (Clayton and Harris, 2004). Here, the emphasis was on the physical attractiveness and supportiveness/submissiveness (exaggerated femininity) of women, which was taken to cement the men's heterosexuality and superiority (hegemonic masculinity).

For the men at BCUC, these female traits were of less importance, and 'pulling' women was aligned more with a philosophy of 'a fuck is a fuck'. Indeed, sex with 'ugly birds', or 'munters', was still something to be bragged about and joked about with team-mates:

> Alistair: You never fucked it, did ya?
> Tom: Too right. It was a sweet-sweep [*an easy thing*], all the way [*laughter*].
> Alistair: Shit.

> Daniel: Like we 'aven't all done worse.
> Tom: Yeah. At least I was getting some last night. Beats 'aving a kebab and a wank [*laughter*].

There is a marked inconsistency, here, between the 'acceptable standard' of women for sexual conquests and for the sexual fantasies discussed in the previous section of the chapter. The 'fuckability' of the latter women was premised, in the main, on emphasised femininity (attractiveness, even perfection). In the reality of the men's lives, however, standards were very different. This is not to say that perceived attractiveness was of no importance. 'Munters' were not considered as potential long-term partners, and within the behavioural code that the ability to pull women was a symbol of one's masculine standing, the more attractive the woman was, the greater the status for the man.

The BCUC football context, then, was a place where (hetero)sexual activity, and talk of heterosexual activity, was a key component of the status system. On the one hand, men that 'pulled' often, and/or 'pulled' 'lust-after' women were at the top of this hierarchy. Their position here was cemented with the overt envy of the other players and an accompaniment of masculinised designations, such as 'the man'. These men were also granted a large and eager audience urging them to 'spill' the details of the sexual encounter. On the other hand, men that had not had sex, or had not been known to have had sex, for a long period of time were 'named and shamed' as heterosexual failures of some kind, often described by the other men as being 'scared of women':

> Some of the guys... they're just, like... I dunno. They don't even try. You see 'em looking at a bird at the bar or something, or they start giving it the mouth, like, 'check 'er out' and 'I'd fuck 'er every way', and all this. So you say, 'go talk to 'er' and, like, try and give them a push, and they're just, like, 'no way'. Then they start making excuses, like, 'I'm not that into it anyway', or something like that. It's like they're scared of women or something. If you like someone, or just fancy a bit, you go for it. Introduce yourself, buy 'em a few drinks, and away you go.
>
> (Sean)

Sean's comments are representative of many of the men, making the whole process of 'pulling' sound very easy. Indeed, the stereotype that 'athletes get the

girls' was a philosophy that some of the players placed a great deal of confidence in, which only increased the pressure on all of the men to be (hetero)sexually promiscuous. Due to rapid segregation of the team as a group towards the end of nights out, however, it was not always easy to see who had and had not 'pulled' by the time the Union closed its doors. As such, the prime method of announcing one's heterosexual credentials was to tell all about the encounter. In this sense, it was the amount of stories told, and the detail and believability of those stories, which determined the men's masculine positional identity.

> In the changing rooms, all the time, it's like, 'yeah, yeah, yeah' and all this, and all this, and 'I've had her' and all this. It's part of our thing. Everybody knows it and everybody does it, and everybody knows that you can kind of, like, subtract, like, fifty per cent or twenty per cent from each story.
>
> (Steve)

It was generally recognised that, to improve his standing, the teller bolstered stories of sexual conquests. Even though the men identified this, sexually explicit stories still had the desired effect, because, if nothing else, they demonstrated an engagement with male hegemony, by way of objectifying and inferiorising women, and repealed any notion of homosexuality (see Connell, 1995; Curry, 1991; Messner, 1992). Sexual promiscuity, while no doubt providing some enjoyment and fulfilment for the individual, was more likely for the purposes of the collective hegemonic masculine culture, where other men were the main audience for this behaviour. As such, the act of sex, itself, was not as significant as a conveyed willingness and ability to use and subordinate women (im)purely as sexual objects.

There was little resistance or challenge to these oppressive masculinities among the players. In opening this section of the chapter, I noted that, when isolated from the collective, some of men appeared ashamed of their engagement with compulsory heterosexuality and, particularly, the sharing of details of sexual conquests with other men. But, while distanced to some degree from hegemonic masculinity, it is difficult to see these individuals voicing their concerns when in the team context, or even to 'opt out' of these behaviours themselves. Their masculinity is, then, complicit, if only through a fear of subordination. Even

those men that were involved in stable relationships would still discuss the most intimate details of their sex-lives with the other players. In this way, despite being less able to be promiscuous about sex, they were able to retain status. Indeed, just having a girlfriend was testimony to one's heterosexuality, and also came with the assumption that sex was being had on a regular basis. But, in other ways, having a girlfriend was also problematic for the players.

Problematic Girlfriends

Girlfriends were something of a litigious issue for the collective practice of hegemonic masculinity and the construction of individual men's masculine guises. This seemed to be for two principal reasons. Firstly, long-term relationships with women implied an intimate bond, an emotional reliance, which was perceived to in some way diminish a man's capacity to be a man. Secondly, this attachment to a woman presented a danger of pollution of the all-male, hegemonic masculine football milieu and a weakening of the same-sex bond between the men.

Richard's girlfriend was in employment in his hometown, and he visited her there every other weekend. When with the football players, Richard would speak of his girlfriend only in the context of the highly sexualised discourse of the changing room, recalling his weekend of sex:

> They know I've got a girlfriend and everyone just accepts it, really. I mean, they know I'm a one-woman guy and don't begrudge me or anything. [...] They wanna know all the details when I go see her and stuff, and I do [tell them]. It's just sort of what you do, isn't it? Sort of a lad's thing. But other than that its... it's not like it gets in the way or anything, 'cus she doesn't live here and it's not like... I'm not like some people who go on and on about it. I don't really talk about her at all with the lads.
>
> (Richard)

Having a girlfriend, then, was attributable to a hegemonic masculine image, but only in a sense of sexual objectification. The everyday details of a relationship were never disclosed, and no-one wanted to hear them anyway. Richard hinted that intimate relationships with women have the potential to 'get in the way' of same-sex friendships, and, particularly, he perceived 'going on and on' about girlfriends to be in some way damaging to his position amongst the men.

Similarly, Messner (1992) found that some of the athletes in his study kept their emotional attachment to a woman a secret, while continuing to engage in highly sexualised rhetoric with male peers. And Curry (1991) notes that, while sexually aggressive talk tends to take the form of a loud public performance, athletes utilise hushed tones when engaging in any serious discussions about relationships. Steve gave some clue as to why this was the case among the men at BCUC:

> If you do pull on a Wednesday then you've, like, scored a goal, so, like... I suppose it's not really prestigious to have a girlfriend, it's more prestigious to, like, just pull randomly when you're out with the lads. To *get* a girl, rather than have one... like, just randomly over a period of time, then you're 'the man' more than if you had a girlfriend.
>
> (Steve)

Sexual conquests were a public construction of manhood-as-heterosexual, but anything further, intimacy with women, assumed no masculine prowess. Intimacy implied an emotional reliance, an attachment to a woman that transgressed the male 'instrumental' role. Writing from his own experiences as an athlete, Sabo (1989) described a similar scenario, of being 'tied' to a stable relationship, which, to his male peers, translated into being 'pussywhipped'.

Male hegemony, in legitimising the project of patriarchy, sanctions only a gendered power dynamic that places men above women in the gender order and, therefore, for a man to (appear to) be dictated to by a woman was to not be a 'real' man. In the case of the BCUC players, none of the men were accused of possessing such subordinated masculinities. The collective practice of hegemonic masculinity, in regard to relations with women, was heterosexual, but emotionally detached. This was all too clear to the men in relationships, and they were careful not to appear dominated by, or too close to, their respective girlfriends.

Richard would only speak of his girlfriend in sexually aggressive tones. Alistair, who had a girlfriend on campus, would frequently ignore (and even go out of his way to avoid) his partner should she also be at the Union on a Wednesday night, although when asked about this he noted to me that he would 'hook-up with it later'. This short statement tells a great deal about the (obligatory) position of

women in the men's construction of masculine self. Reference to women in a detached, devaluing dialect, such as 'it' or 'that', as already noted, was a common feature of heterosexist discourse, which implicated women as something 'less than' men – unimportant except as objects that serve a particular, but limited, purpose (see also Connell, 1990). Moreover, the allusion of Alistair's casual submission that he would spend time with his girlfriend later was that he would take her home with him (or go back to her halls of residence) solely for the purpose of sex. In this way, despite having exclusive and intimate relationships with women, both Richard and Alistair managed to sustain an air of flippancy about these attachments, promoting the hegemonic masculine 'conquest' while keeping the subordinated emotionality dynamic covert and private.

Gary, too, had a girlfriend on campus, and would spend time with her on a Wednesday night. In this way, he was the exception to the dominant masculinities of the group. But Gary had his own strategy to deal with this, as the following talk fragment from an early period of a Wednesday night shows:

> Daniel: Is this your bird?
> Gary: Yeah. Izzy, this is Daniel.
> Izzy: [*aghast*] Bird? [*turns away from them both. Daniel walks away laughing*].
> Gary: [*biting his bottom lip*] Sorry, my girlfriend [*puts his hand on her shoulder apologetically*].

Here, Gary demonstrates two sides to his masculine self. On the one hand, the complicit masculinities whereby he accepts and (through his silence) condones the sex-objectification language valued as a dynamic of collective practice in the collegiate football milieu. On the other hand, the subordinated masculinities by way of his submissiveness towards Izzy and denial of the hegemonic masculine code. But these latter behaviour patterns were only subordinated in Gary's same-sex peer group and, in the context of his private relationship with his girlfriend, these same masculinities were appreciated and admired as characteristic of maleness. Gary only expressed this 'other'-self once Daniel had left.

In this way, like Richard and Alistair, Gary managed to balance his relationships with his peers and his girlfriend by embodying the masculinity appropriate to each

context. Here, it is clear that some of the respondent group suffered at the hands of hegemonic masculinity. The need to prove their manhood through sexual conquests and a denial of intimacy and emotionality compels them to give up other feelings in order to secure a masculine positional identity (see also Messner, 1992). But the problematisation of girlfriends went deeper than this. Far from just (potentially) constructing a subordinated masculine identity for the individual men, girlfriends were considered a latent threat to the men's practice of hegemonic masculinity as a whole.

> Wednesday nights are more of just a lad's night. I don't think it's sort of... you know, a girls thing. But if she was here, I'd take her, 'cus it doesn't bother me... I see the lads all the time and I don't see her very often, so I'd take her to the Union and spend time with her, I think, yes.
>
> (Richard)

This was a minority view, and one that contradicted Richard's actual behavioural patterns, whereby he kept the non-sexual dynamics of his relationship well away from the gaze of his team-mates. But Richard's opening comments, here, were more akin to the dominant position of the football players – Wednesday night (and other nights besides) was a 'lad's night'. Girlfriends were not generally invited, and never welcomed by the other players. Moreover, girlfriends were not expected to interfere with male bonding, whether they were present or not:

> It's sort of seen as you, like, being, erm... if you've got a girlfriend then you're letting down the lads. Saying, like, 'I can't go out because I'm going to hers', and they'd say, 'oh, you're letting us down', and all this.
>
> (Steve)

The same-sex friendships shaped in football took precedence over all other relationships. The hegemonic code ordained that friends came first, this is where the men's loyalties should lie, and girlfriends were always secondary to this. In the words of Lyman (1987: 156), the male bond was defined as 'intimate but not sexual (homosocial) and relationships with women [were] sexual but not intimate (heterosexual)'. In this sense, hegemonic masculinity was at the heart of the interrelationship of the football players and women, because friendships with

women (sexual or otherwise) were constructed through (and, importantly, subordinated to) friendships with male team-mates (see also Connell, 1995; Messner, 1992).

Summary

In this chapter I have underlined the production and reproduction of football masculinities in the sub-cultural practices of the BCUC football team. The football fraternity, here, was a spawning ground for hegemonic masculine values, where rituals and behavioural patterns reflected what some sociologists have defined as 'rape culture' (Beneke, 1982; Herman, 1984; Sanday, 1981). Women, as girlfriends and as a topic of conversation, were sex-objectified and assigned limited and abstract roles, which were measured purely on the grounds of a hegemonic (exaggeratedly feminine), hetero-sexy benchmark. But this discourse (and, less frequently, action) was not specifically aligned to the individual men's relationships with women. Rather, it was concerned with the development of the men's relationships with one another, which were potentially undermined by the existence of 'actual' women (as opposed to sexualised, disembodied objects) in the fraternal environment (see also Messner, 1992).

At the very centre of this fraternity lay an antagonistic, competitive dynamic, which was predominantly attached to a culture of heavy drinking, sexual conquests and jocularity. Here the men's friendships developed in a relatively 'safe' environment, characterised by a shared and collective stake in the project of patriarchy. Any deviation from the aims of that project was countered with a rich vocabulary of subordinating, often homophobic, discourse. However, though the collegiate football subculture appeared to support the status quo of the wider structure of power relations between men and women, and men and other men (the gender order), it was also marked by internal contradictions, by complicit and subordinated beliefs and values. While homophobia was unashamedly prominent in the everyday rhetoric of the players as a jocular assault on heterosexual team-mates, which, I have argued, was a form of regulating masculinity and contesting one's own place in the gender order, few, if any, prejudices were manifest among the men. That is, the men did not appear to actually be homophobic, any more than they were racist. Further, while intimacy with women was collectively

considered to be destructive to masculine identity (both individual and team) and was, therefore, subordinated and policed, many of the men did in fact develop durable, egalitarian heterosexual relationships. Importantly, however, these were confined to outside the male football milieu as part of a separate, conflicting masculine identity. The final chapter will develop these issues further, as well as issues raised elsewhere in this thesis, and draw some conclusions to the research questions outlined in Chapter 1.

# Chapter 9:

# Concluding Remarks

Through an ethnographic approach and from a pro-feminist standpoint, this case study has provided a detailed portrayal of the life world of one group of male collegiate football players at Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College (BCUC). In some ways, this study was conducted as a 'pure' imparting of the nuances and idiosyncrasies of this world, utilising the players' own words to produce an authentic account of their lives in collegiate football. But it was not simply a reproduction of these stories. Rather, it was an interpretative narrative in which my own voice is heard throughout, culminating in a partial representation of football culture at BCUC. Within this, a number of questions and issues have been cited relating to cultural hegemony, masculine identities, and the formation and maintenance of a gender order in collegiate football.

Throughout, I have adopted and considered the pro-feminist assumption that football is a social practice that exaggerates male-female difference, and, therefore, there exists an affinity between the institution of football and men's developing identities. This study has made a significant contribution to knowledge and methodology in pro-feminist research, the central finding of which is that the men at BCUC constructed personalities and relationships that reflected the wider structure of gender relations in Western hegemony, but these identities were not always unproblematically assembled any more than they were homogeneous. Indeed, there were numerous tensions, competing discourses and contradictions at work within these socialisation processes.

Football and Male Identity

The men at BCUC demonstrated an intense commitment, both as boys and as adults, to football as a significant component of an appropriate male identity. The composition of this commitment may have undergone a transformation over time, paralleled with the transition into adulthood, the flagging anticipation of

professionalism, and the resultant redefinition of what it is to be a man. But, crucial to any of the players' definitions of masculinity were behaviours, values and attitudes, that they could only find a podium for in football.

The importance of structure and agency prior to initial contact with football was clear, though there was little homogeneity in these processes. The players drew a sense of self from a variety of sources and their individual identities were, therefore, necessarily complex and disjointed. The men's footballing identities, however, were seemingly less intricate, though the structuring of these identities remained intensely personal and individualistic. That is to say, the processes of socialisation and, specifically, the dovetailing of early football participation and some kind of rite de passage, operated heterogeneously, citing and giving more or less importance to one or more of an eclectic range of cultural agents, such as fathers, school teachers or peers (see Chapter 6). And, moreover, these agents were alluded to in both linear and non-linear socialisation processes. But, significantly, the strength of the football/manhood equation bound all of the men in this case study, regardless of the route to this identity.

So, involvement in the world of football was integral to the men's individual definitions of masculinity. Following this statement, it is important to recognise the two principal underpinnings of the football/masculine reciprocal identity. Firstly, the composition of male identity was founded upon, and framed around, historically constructed structures of supremacy that empower men over women. Therefore, the men's specific masculinising actions as boys and as adults necessarily contributed to the reproduction of these structures. These actions included, and, indeed, prioritised, athletic involvement, which embodied, or was taken to embody, a ubiquitously acknowledged character of hegemonic masculinity. Following on from this, it is important to recognise an explicitly English hierarchy of sports, in which football reigns as the nationally significant, and extensively male, sporting practice. That is, while other sports afford men further opportunities for the development of a dominant gendered identity, which may be more prevailing in this regard than non-sporting activities, there is continued acclaim for football as the primary site for boys and young men to cultivate appropriate gendered characteristics. As such, while other similarly

confrontational and traditionally male sports, such as rugby, were acknowledged by the men as appropriate sites for the construction of apposite male identities, they were nonetheless marginalised as different and inferior to football.

Once introduced to the world of football, by fathers, school PE lessons and teachers, or school friends, the men found themselves in an exclusively male world, and became engrossed in the gendered competitiveness that that world endorsed. As previous chapters have demonstrated, this particular male identity was not always a comfortable 'fit' for the men, presenting a number of competing discourses and highlighting the conflicting, multiple identities of these players, which, in turn, produced numerous contradictions of hegemonic masculinity. But, within this organised milieu of male solidarity, the hegemonic project was powerful enough to reinforce constraints on the boys, and later as men, in experimenting with alternative ways of being a man.

The men's introduction to collegiate football coincided with a noteworthy transition in their lives. Specifically, for all of the them, boyhood and adolescent aspirations of playing professional football had been requisitely replaced with alternative potential careers (see Chapter 6). Significantly, then, the acquisition of masculine identity suffered something of a setback, as their adult identities could no longer rely on football as the premier site for this production. Instead, the men needed a new avenue within which to construct ideologically sound gendered subjectivities – to be a 'real' man. At university, a new male identity could be found, derived from academic success and the potential for subsequent fiscal procurement – gendered power through a different means. But football remained central to the construction of these new identities, as the men continued to play and designed their new careers around the sport, essentially producing at least two conflicting male selves – the academic and the 'jock'.

Provisionally, at least, these contradictory identities could be separated, each reserved for the specific context in which it was constructed and procured value. However, it would be naïve to suggest that the nuances of one did not impact on the other, particularly when taken into account that many of these men were studying for a BA (Hons) Sports Management and Football Studies, the

boundaries between the academic and the athletic were distinctly blurred. Moreover, as football players also dominated the academic context, the football identity procured greater value, in a hegemonic sense, rather than the academic. Indeed, as Messner (1992) articulates, there is a particular affinity between sports institutions and men's developing identities. BCUC was no exception here, and football, rather than academia, was viewed as the foremost arena in which the men could express their dominance over women and subordinated male groups.

In many ways the BCUC players had already been socialised into the ways of being a footballing man, prior to joining the university college's team. However, following Connell's (1987, 1995) theory of 'collective practice' and the notion that each locale may have its own particular brand of hegemonic masculinity, the men were socialised further upon contact with collegiate football, into the precise codes of practice advocated by the BCUC football milieu. In this sense, the men developed masculinities that reflected the particular idiosyncrasies of this collegiate football institution, but those masculinities were predominantly hegemonic in that the collective practice of maleness advocated patterns of behaviour that sustained a wider project of patriarchy.

The hegemonic project at BCUC was acted out in two separate, but associated, spheres of the collegiate football institution. Firstly, the structure of football practice itself, which was problematically organized around the conflicting external influences of the wider Higher Education institution and the global sport of football. These, in turn, impacted upon and shaped an internal set of values and masculinities, which were communicated to the players through authority figures (the coach and the team Captain) and the cultural norms of the training ground and match-days. Secondly, hegemonic patterns were conveyed and celebrated in the football subculture, via rituals, symbols and the configuration of friendships and other relationships.

Collegiate Football as Hegemonic Patterning

The analysis of sport masculinities has, in the past, overwhelmingly taken its focus from athletic subcultures, while the actual routines and actions of sporting practice have been sidelined, ignored, or been assigned little more than a few

melancholy sentences. When we consider the history of sport, and particularly football, hegemonic masculinity is a constant theme. Early sports were regularly combative, violent and used for military training. They were stringently male pursuits: the actions and practices they required provided an ideal arena for the boy-to-man transition, while girls and women were rendered physically incapable of participating (see especially Mangan, 2000).

At BCUC, ritualised aggression on the pitch was commonplace, predominantly regarded by the players as 'part of what we do' and linked with competitive achievement. On some occasions 'legitimate' aggression turned into marginal violence, as the men pushed, kicked out at, grabbed the shirt of, and occasionally even directed a head-butt towards opposing players. These actions were, of course, deemed illegal and were met with cautions from presiding officials – a yellow card, but rarely a red card. However, a booking and resultant fine was the limit of any punishment for violence, yet the same behaviour 'off the pitch' would potentially result in suspension from the university college and, perhaps, legal action. The football arena, then, offered something of a protective umbrella, which deemed aggression and violence as tolerable in a competitive male arena, and even condoned and endorsed it.

The men's attitudes towards aggression and violence on the pitch differed markedly from their outlook on these same behaviours more generally. Starting a fight away from the field of play was something that only 'twats' did. Such language marginalizes violent masculinities as hyper-masculine, exceeding the bounds of hegemonic masculinity. It was in this respect that the university college's rugby players were judged to be a marginalised group, concerned only with 'thuggishness' and fighting, rather than fun and revelry. Yet women, and particularly women's football, was subordinated by way of being not aggressive and violent enough. These traits, then, were concerned only with athletic success and, essentially, were legitimated under the guise of being 'nothing personal'. Moreover, aggression and violence in rugby were viewed by the men to be the sole requirements to play and be successful, while football was considered to entail greater technical ability, pace, awareness and coordination. Conversely,

however, aesthetic qualities and technical ability were, in fact, subordinated in the hierarchical football training milieu as something feminine.

But these purportedly effeminate actions were given authorisation on match-day as necessary components of the masculine identity associated with winning. Athletic achievement was the dominant symbol of hegemonic masculinity in the collegiate football arena. In this sense, as women were viewed as objects to be manipulated and sexually conquered, other men were also objects, to be defeated and bettered (see also Messner, 1992). As such, the team was hierarchical in structure, with ability and, moreover, particular abilities, highly valued as symbols of masculine identity. But as a collective identity, the team valued success over other teams, which necessitated discipline, seriousness and a respect for the authority of the coach and the captain (see Chapter 7). Thus, any defiance of the routines and practices of the training ground would result in a barrage of subordinating labels – viewed as a lack of commitment to the hegemonic project, which associated the male body with success and superiority over women and 'lesser' men and male groups.

The bulk of existing research on collegiate sport originates in North America, and, in the UK, sport at university has a very different meaning. But the BCUC men's commitment to their roles as football players was seemingly no less fervent than that of US athletes described by Messner (1992), for example. All of the men were in agreement that playing football was in some way 'masculine', that the routines and actions that this sport required were demonstrative of a significant gendered power differential between male football players, women and non-footballing men. In the football milieu, at least, other masculinities were consequently subordinated (e.g. academic, intelligent) or marginalised (e.g. excessive violent, insolent), and a hierarchy of gendered groups was developed, where football players were dominant and superior to subordinated (e.g. women, non-athletic men) and marginalised (e.g. rugby players) groups.

Football Friendships as Hegemonic Patterning

Messner (1992: 106) articulates that the kinds of relationships that male athletes develop with each other are 'like family'. This, Messner explains, is because

friendships with team-mates are among the closest that young men ever develop, but underneath the talk of respect and closeness lie internal antagonisms rooted in hierarchy. The men at BCUC were no exception in this regard. Their relationships with one another were undoubtedly close; yet at their heart lay a socially structured need for competitiveness and conditional self-worth.

At a micro level these antagonisms related to being better than other men in a competitive search for a place on the team, for status as a big drinker or as a 'puller' of women. At a macro level, these internal rivalries may be seen as a struggle for hegemonic masculine identity and a place in the wider gender order. As such the men's friendships were cemented with hegemonic patterns, with sexism, homophobia, and compulsory heterosexuality. That is not to say that, within this masculine frame, the men could not develop intimate friendships, but there was a socially constructed need to justify this intimacy, to root the closeness in a stable and 'safe' environment. Indeed, when questioned, the players tended to reject the notion of intimacy altogether and, instead, define relationships with team-mates with something less suggestive (of homosexuality), as 'necessary togetherness' for the good of the team. These friendships, then, were developed and defined as shared (masculine) activities with a purpose. The broad purpose being football, but, within this, the creation of a heterosexual environment for the development of masculine identities.

In examining these friendships in the wider context of cultural hegemony (socially constructed power relations between men and women and between men and other men), the implications are considerable. What emerged was a strictly male, heterosexual and homophobic locale analogous to what many feminist researchers have designated a 'rape culture' (Beneke, 1982; Herman, 1984; Sanday, 1981). In the collective practice of hegemonic masculinity, the players valued conspicuous heterosexuality, in which talk (and, often, actions) objectified women as heterosexy effects. Simultaneously, homosexuality was subordinated with a rich vocabulary of jocular abuse. Here, other men were the main audience for these behaviours, where the emphasis was on 'proving' one's own heterosexuality and, moreover, proving one's success as a heterosexual male.

Consequently, men's power over women was reasserted by way of symbolic rape – sexual dominance – and by the assigning of an abstract, objectified cultural role to women. Here, girlfriends became a problematic issue for the men, as long term relationships with women implied intimacy and egalitarianism, and also impinged upon a man's ability to overtly display his 'pulling power'. As Messner (1992: 107) has noted, male athletic cultures often cement the male bond, but impoverish the development of egalitarian relationships with either men or women.

The competitive hierarchy, however, went beyond mere competition for women. Virtually all actions in the football subculture became a challenge; an opportunity to improve or reinforce one's place in the masculine hierarchy of the team. The basis of these constructions of masculine identity ranged from alcohol consumption, to telling/playing and 'taking' jokes, to general raucousness and an appetite for revelry. All of which were seen to provide 'natural' differences between men and women, and between heterosexual men and gay men. But this path to masculine status was thwart with danger. The innate contradictions of hegemonic masculinity presented a fine line between the masculine and the effeminate. Drinking 'big' and being drunk, for example, were characteristic of male footballing identity, but the risk of effeminate side effects (feeling ill, vomiting) featured large.

The collective culture of the team frequently compelled the men to give up other feelings and beliefs in order to construct an appropriate identity in this particular milieu. Initiation rituals, particularly, were based on a premise of public humiliation, and masculinity was acquired through one's willingness to participate and laugh at oneself. Most of the men struggled with and were wary of this concept as a potential site for emasculation, but, ultimately, the promise of hegemonic masculine identity outweighed the risks. Thus, the men's experiences of collegiate football culture were not entirely positive, nor were they the same for all of the men. A number of competing beliefs and values imposed upon the footballing identity, which highlights the danger of assuming that sport is a seamless socialising agent, and of viewing masculinity, and even hegemonic masculinity, as a monolithic category.

Collective Practice and Contextuality: Conflicting Identities

Bly (1990), in his popular and influential, but often contentious, mythopoetic text, *Iron John*, indicated a crisis of masculinity that had developed from a contemporary meaninglessness of the traditional male role. Amidst Bly's reasoning was an increasingly detectable capriciousness of traditional masculine codes, which resulted in ideological images of maleness being 'worn out' (ibid: ix). While Bly's observations have merit, I would not hesitate in refuting the pertinence of his conclusions. That is to say, data collected for this case study underlines the need to refute the singular and the monolithic and, instead, consider multiplicity in men's constructions of masculine self (multiple structures, multiple personalities, multiple agencies and, importantly, multiple contexts). But, the evidence here also highlights the effectiveness of male hegemony and a wider social gender order, and, particularly, a continuing affinity between the codes and practices of football and the hegemonic project. Far from being meaningless and 'worn out', hegemonic masculinity remains unyielding in men's constructions of self-identity, though it is but a (significant) part of a complex range of subjectivities, gathered from a variety of sources.

Crucial to this multiplicity of male identity is Messner's (1992) conceptualisation of the interrelationship between social agency, personality and social structure. From the evidence presented in this case study, I would suggest one more source of identification – that of time and space (social context). Particularly, there were competing ideologies garnered from the macro contexts of the athletic and the academic, which, while both were informed by an importance of social standing and personal success, appear to be contradictory in the examination of the nuances of their attitudes and behavioural codes. At the heart of this conflict, I have inferred, is a differentiation of traditional class masculinities, where male identity in the football realm was partially constructed against, and as a foil for, the middle-class authority of Higher Education.

Other contexts, and subsequent conflicts, were also visible. Challenges here were many: football was considered, and acted out, as a stringently male domain, yet two of the men were involved in the promotion and development of the women's game; everyday discourse and jocularity was fundamentally homophobic, yet, at

an individual level (during interviews and the like), none of the men demonstrated prejudice; relationships with women were culturally defined as objectified, (hetero)sexual but never intimate, yet some of the men did enjoy covert intimacy and longevity with girlfriends.

Football masculinities, then, were a collective practice of values, behaviours and actions that did not always carry the same worth in other contexts of the men's lives. And it was on the fringes of each context that conflict and contradiction occurred. Moreover, further contradictions of hegemonic masculinity were evident internal to the football context. For example, the ability to 'drink big' was at the very centre of the football subculture, yet two of the men did not like to get drunk. This particular conflict produced an interesting irony, in that it took a 'real man' to resist the cultural pressures and admit to and feel secure about 'drinking small'. Also, the overriding patriarchal, misogynistic 'rape culture' of the collegiate football milieu did not sit comfortably with all of the men. Many would not engage in the sexist and homophobic repartee that marked changing room and Student Union discourses. Some, on rare occasions, would openly challenge this behaviour.

Here, we may look to Messner's (1992) combination of social agency, personality and social structure to explain this diversity in ideologies and practices. Andrew, for example, engaged in far more egalitarian discourses and practices than many of his team-mates, which may be a reflection of the family values and, specifically, the meanings attached to masculinity (which rejected football participation) during his childhood and adolescence. Conversely, Steve and Sean were strongly coerced into football participation by their fathers as a rite of passage to manhood. Both of these men placed a great deal of emphasis on the 'natural' differences between men and women as justification for the subordination of anything effeminate. Steve and Sean, along with Alex, Tom and, to a lesser extent, Brad, were the forerunners of the hegemonic project in the collegiate football milieu. The other men demonstrated far less vigorous associations with the wider patterns of patriarchy. But, they were nonetheless complicit in the constitution of male hegemony. That is, as De Garis (2000) also warned in his study of male identities in boxing, the relatively few and frequently

covert egalitarian discourses and practices neither disrupted nor contributed to broad relations of male dominance.

Realisations

The rationale for this research was clear. The knowledge base of football sociology and theories of hegemony and gendered power structures was limited, and this study has broadened this base. While this was an ethnography of just one group of male collegiate football players and, thus, its representative value is confined to this particular context, it is an important contribution to the field of study. The value of this research lies in the rich and detailed description of the construction of masculinities in the BCUC football culture and in the more sophisticated use of masculinity theory, particularly that of Connell (1987a, 1995), that many previous studies have been lacking.

The findings of this study largely concur with previous feminist and pro-feminist analyses of sport, and are consistent with sociological theories of football (e.g. Giulianotti, 1999). Unfortunately, there is a distinct lack of actual research concerning male football and gender, and, especially, a deficiency of sociological analyses of collegiate sports. This thesis has developed these areas, and what it adds to existing feminist literature is further recognition of the multiplicity of masculinities. That is to say, though collegiate football at BCUC (re)produced dominant conceptualisations of masculinity, there were numerous tensions and contradictions in individual men's experiences, highlighting the importance of structure and agency, and also social context. Furthermore, the values and behaviours revered by the men were something of a subspecies, rather than a reproduction, of wider hegemonic patterns – complicit to, but not entirely in accordance with culturally dominant conceptions of maleness. Fighting, for instance, was a marginalised activity at BCUC – a trait of other 'thick' men.

Indeed, many of the nuances of hegemonic masculinity did not comfortably 'fit' with the men, and the importance of 'collective practice' (Connell, 1987a, 1995) should be stressed in all future works. Moreover, researchers need to recognise the interrelationship of Connell's multiple forms of masculinity (hegemonic, complicit, marginalised and subordinated), not as bounded typologies – as forms

of expression of particular groups of men – but as the components and beliefs of individual men's male self. This ethnography has also surpassed the bulk of existing studies in sport and gender through its consideration of the male body as an active component in the construction of masculinities, and highlighted that social constructionism, while useful in the analysis of sporting identities, should not ignore the body altogether. Indeed, this study has made significant contributions to knowledge, theory and methodology. Methodologically, we may look to the triangulation of methods under a flexible interpretive approach to ethnography and the unconventional writing-up of methodological issues as 'tales from the field', through to the innovative method of note-taking using a mobile phone.

A further contribution to knowledge has been made to the field of football sociology more generally. Previous studies have tended to explore the professional locale and ignore amateur and collegiate football altogether. Moreover, while the question of gender frequently emerges from these studies, it is regularly glossed over and taken for granted. This study goes some way towards a more sophisticated examination of gender in football, and provides a foothold for further research into non-elite football cultures and, specifically, for the analysis of football masculinities.

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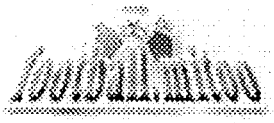
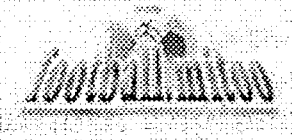
# Appendix 1
# Fixtures and Results





2002-2003 Season

# Southern England Students Sports Association

## Division Three (North)

### Fixtures & Results

**20 in list**

**Wednesday, 20 November 2002**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | 1 | Middlesex University 4 v Bucks University College (HW) 2 |
| 0 | 5 | University of Westminster 3 v Oaklands College 1 |

**Wednesday, 13 November 2002**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | 1 | Bucks University College (HW) 2 v University of Herts (Hatfield) 4 |
| 5 | 0 | Oaklands College 1 v Middlesex University 4 |

**Tuesday, 12 November 2002**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | University of Herts (Hatfield) 4 v Oaklands College 1<br>postponed 16/10/2002 |

**Wednesday, 30 October 2002**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | Bucks University College (HW) 2 v Oaklands College 1 |

**Wednesday, 16 October 2002**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | 0 | Middlesex University 4 v University of Westminster 3 |

**Wednesday, 09 October 2002**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | 5 | Middlesex University 4 v University of Herts (Hatfield) 4 |

**Wednesday, 11 September 2002**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | 6 | University of Westminster 3 v Bucks University College (HW) 2 |



327

318

387

2002-2003 Season

# Southern England Students Sports Association

## Division Three (North)

### Fixtures & Results

**20 in list**

**Wednesday, 19 February 2003**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0 | **University of Herts (Hatfield) 4** v **University of Westminster 3**<br>postponed - no info awarded |
| 0 | 1 | **University of Westminster 3** v **University of Herts (Hatfield) 4**<br>postponed from 30/10/2002, awarded **Double Header** |

**Monday, 17 February 2003**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 4 | **Middlesex University 4** v **Oaklands College 1**<br>postponed from 12/2/03 |

**Wednesday, 12 February 2003**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | 1 | **University of Herts (Hatfield) 4** v **Bucks University College (HW) 2** |

**Wednesday, 05 February 2003**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 8 | 5 | **Oaklands College 1** v **University of Herts (Hatfield) 4** |
| 1 | 1 | **University of Westminster 3** v **Middlesex University 4** |

**Wednesday, 29 January 2003**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4 | 0 | **Bucks University College (HW) 2** v **Middlesex University 4**<br>postponed 6/11/2002 |

**Wednesday, 08 January 2003**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0 | **Oaklands College 1** v **University of Westminster 3**<br>postponed 6/11/2002, Postponed - no new date |

**Wednesday, 04 December 2002**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4 | 4 | **Oaklands College 1** v **Bucks University College (HW) 2** |

**Wednesday, 27 November 2002**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 6 | 0 | **Bucks University College (HW) 2** v **University of Westminster 3** |
| 0 | 1 | **University of Herts (Hatfield) 4** v **Middlesex University 4** |

**Earlier matches....**



328

314
388

Fixtures & Results Unscheduled Matches League Table
WoCup WoPlt ChCup ChPlt InCup InPlt
ReCup RePlt WDivA WDivB WDiv1 WDiv2
PremN PremS PremE PremW Div1N
Div1S Div1E Div1W Div2N Div2S Div2E
Div3N Div3S Div3E Div4N Div4S Div4E
Div5N Div5S Div5E Misc
LogIn Home Clubs

2002-2003 Season

# Southern England Students Sports Association

## Division Three (North)

### League Table

| Team | Games Played | Games Won | Games Drawn | Games Lost | Goals For | Goals Against | Goal Difference | Points |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Oaklands College 1 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 29 | 12 | +17 | 18 |
| Bucks University College (HW) 2 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 25 | 12 | +13 | 14 |
| University of Herts (Hatfield) 4 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 16 | 15 | +1 | 13 |
| Middlesex University 4 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 10 | 20 | -10 | 10 |
| University of Westminster 3 | 8 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 24 | -21 | 1 |

Please click **here** to see the corresponding Results Grid Please click **here** to receive an email of this League Table

Goalscorer information has not been recorded so there is no leading goalscorer table.

# Appendix 2
# Interview Form

**Faculty of Leisure and Tourism**
**Research Unit**

**Interviewee Information Form**

Dear .....

Many thanks for agreeing to be interviewed about your experiences as a football player. Your participation will be invaluable to me in completing my Ph.D research. Please read the following information carefully and then sign and date the form where indicated.

Before we begin the interview, I would like to assure you that your answers will remain completely confidential and a pseudonym will be used if I quote you at any time in my final thesis.

Your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary. It is your right to refuse to give answer to any question at any time. You are also free to terminate this interview at any time. The interview will be tape-recorded.

This interview will be very much interviewee led. I hope that a number of the things we talk about will be instigated by you, and at times we may even talk about my experiences. Try to think of this session as an informal chat, rather than an interview, and try to be as open and honest as you can.

I would be grateful if you could sign below to show that you have read this form.

..... (signature)

..... (print name)

..... (date)

Many thanks for giving up your time.

Yours sincerely,

Ben Clayton

# Appendix 3
# Interview Schedule

**Interview Schedule**

| Pseudonym | Age | Date | Duration | Parental Status | Siblings | Ethnicity/Nationality | Academic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Daniel | 23 | 21/5/03 | 1hr 14mins | Divorced | 1 younger brother,<br>1 younger sister,<br>2 older step-sisters | White/English | BA (Hons) Sport Coaching |
| Steve | 24 | 10/6/03 | 1hr 33mins | Married | 1 older brother,<br>1 younger brother,<br>1 older sister,<br>1 younger sister | White/Danish | BA (Hons) Sport Management & Football Studies |
| Sean | 21 | 10/6/03 | 1hr 21mins | Divorced | 1 older brother,<br>1 older sister,<br>2 older step-brothers | White/English | BA (Hons) Graphic Design & Advertising |
| Brad | 24 | 10/6/03 | 1hr 3mins | Married | None | White/English | BA (Hons) Sport & Human Performance |
| Michael | 19 | 20/10/03 | 0hr 56mins | Divorced | 1 younger brother | White/English | BA (Hons) Sport Coaching |
| Gary | 19 | 21/10/03 | 1hr 7mins | Married | 2 older sisters | White/English | BA (Hons) Sport Coaching |
| Andrew | 20 | 24/10/03 | 1hr 48mins | Married | 1 older sister,<br>1 younger sister | Black/English | BA (Hons) Sport Management & Football Studies |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Richard | 19 | 11/11/03 | 1hr 17mins | Married | 2 older sisters (twins), White/English<br>1 older half-brother,<br>1 older half-sister | BA (Hons) Sport Management & Football Studies |